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PRADT - NARRATIVE 1816

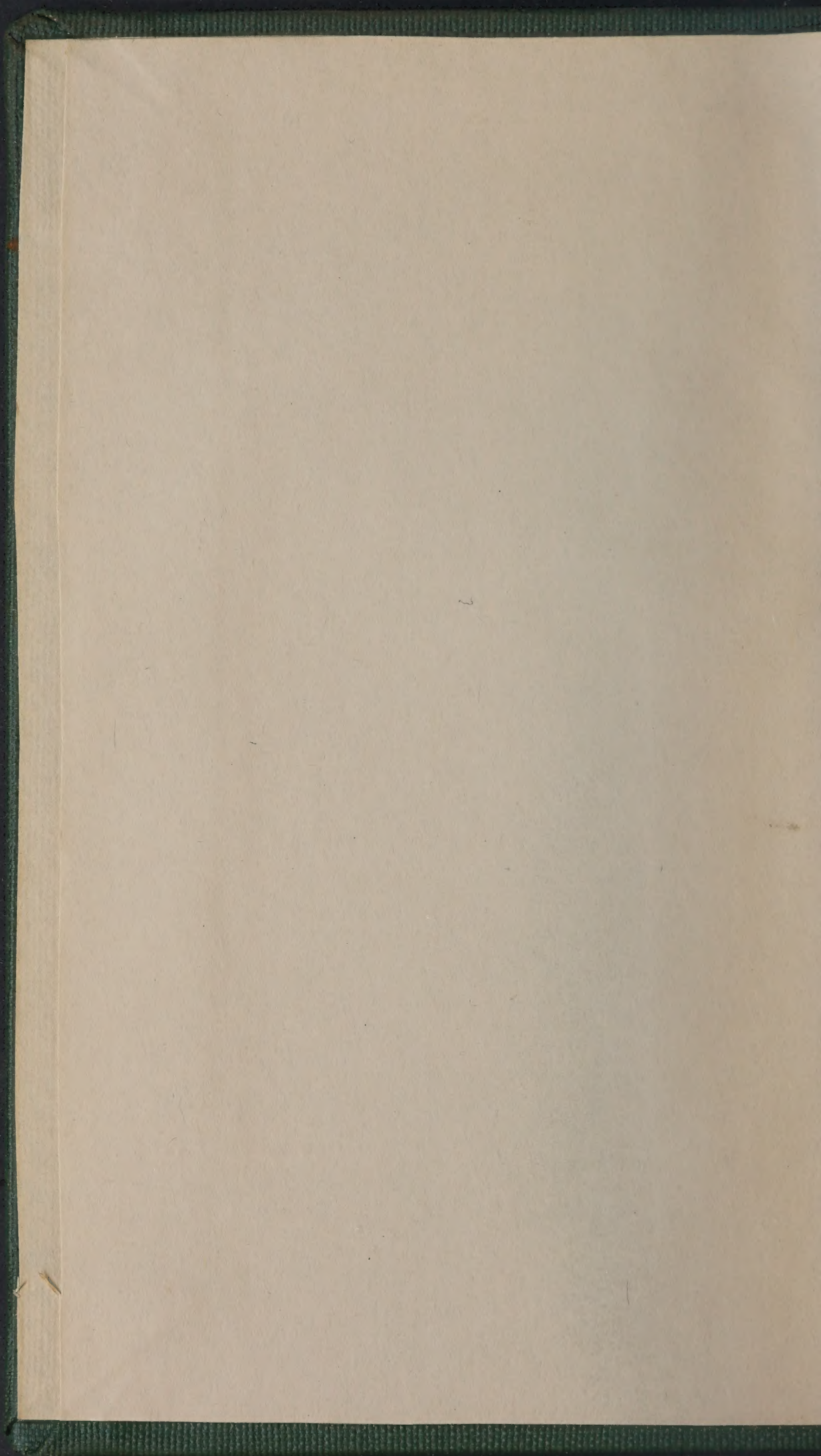


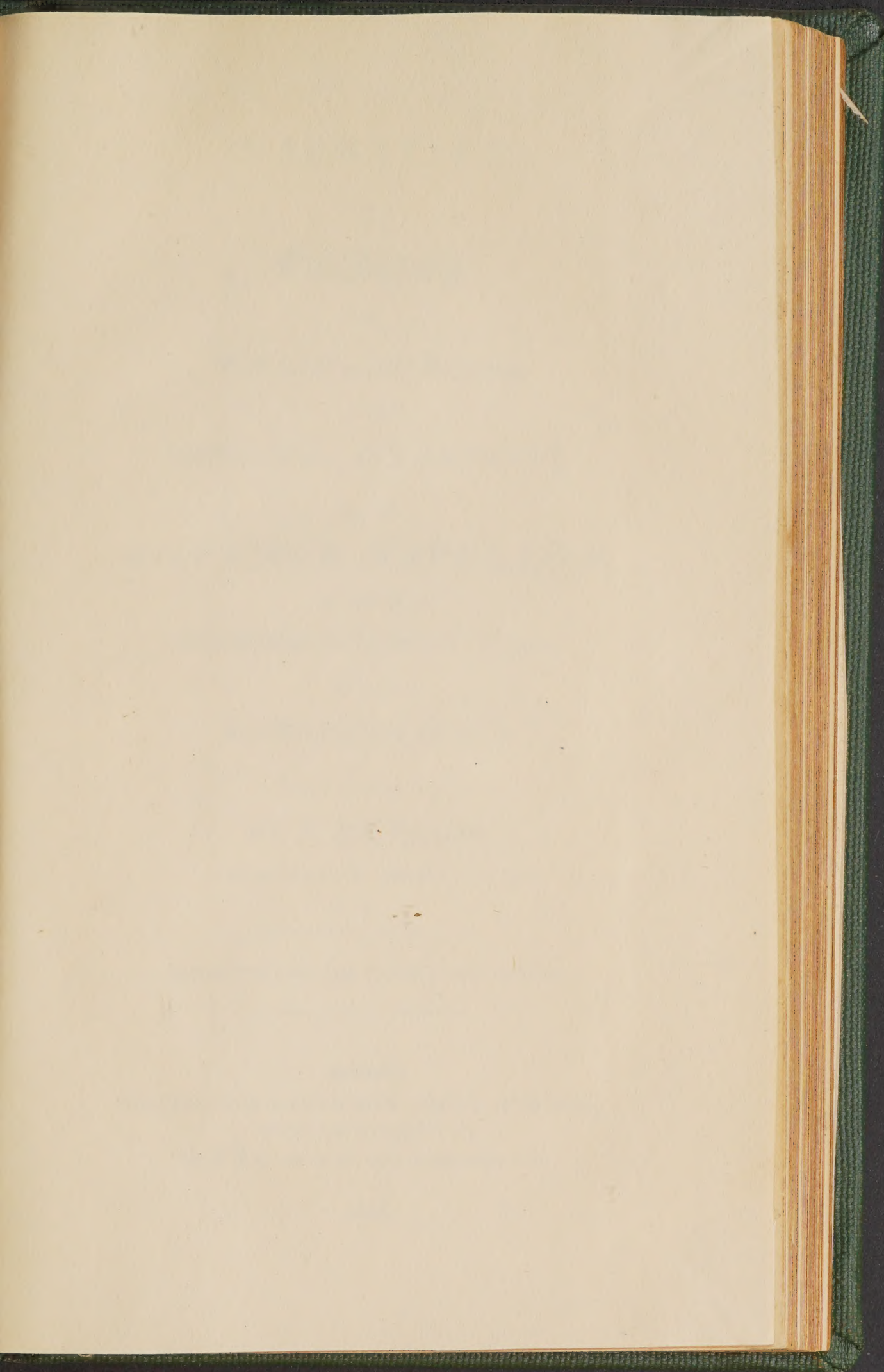


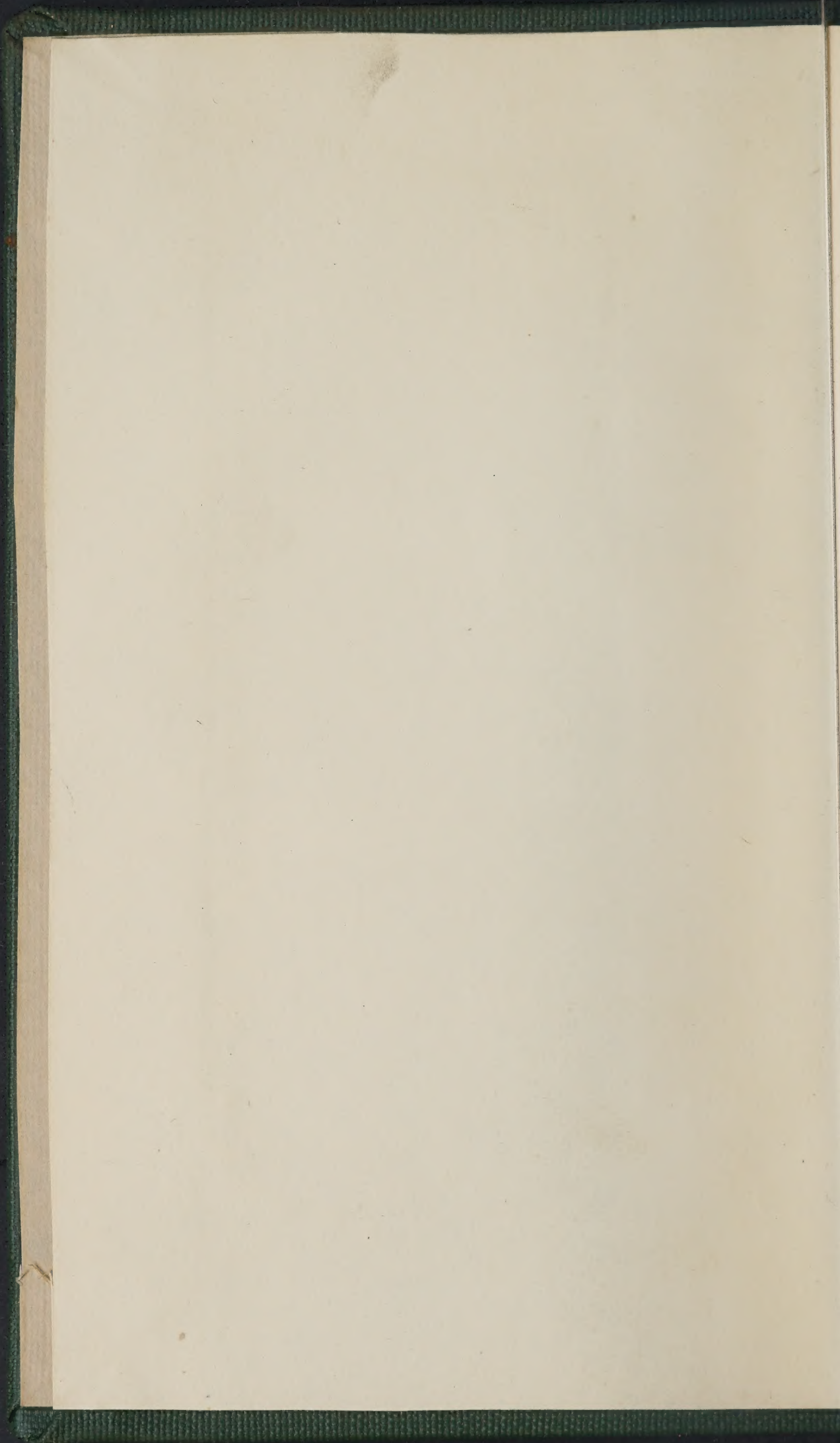


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NARRATIVE
OF AN
Embassy
TO
WARSAW AND WILNA,
WITH
PERSONAL ATTENDANCE
ON THE
EMPEROR NAPOLEON,
DURING THE
DISASTROUS CAMPAIGN IN RUSSIA,
AND THE
RETREAT FROM MOSCOW.

BY M. DE PRADT,
ARCHBISHOP OF MECHLIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SECOND FRENCH EDITION.

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P896

PREFACE.

NAPOLÉON has disappeared from the theatre of the world. His death to a royal and civil life will now admit all kinds of disclosures. No sort of interdict any longer exists. He is a kind of historical performer, consigned over to posterity.

Though he stands accused before the whole universe I have another task to fulfil ; that of furnishing explanations, a task by no means difficult. Verse may be inspired by indignation, but there is no necessity for a poet's abilities to draw his character.

For all the good of which Napoleon has deprived the world and the evils he has created, it has a right to curse him ; still after so many years of admiration and of blind submission to his authority, few will contend for that of insulting him.

It is very singular that he who of all men has lived most in public ; and that he who has done and said so much should hitherto perhaps have been the least known.

During the ten years that I have been about his person, I have been always sensibly struck

with that want of judgment which this strange man manifested on so many occasions. If Napoleon himself has been abused we have also been equally abused on his account.

It is long since I have seen him held up as a supernatural being; the lower order of people have looked upon him as a man above the necessities of nature, his natural and moral endowments in their ideas, elevating him above the rest of mankind.

I have passed ten years near his person, and I took pride in being about a man who has in our days excited as much noise in the world as Cæsar or Tamerlane in their time.

I wished to be near those of his partisans who have given things a new face. I have observed them with attention, and have regretted the prepossession of those persons which will be a great loss to history.

From this pre-possession, his admirers fell into absolute fascination. A thousand times I have seen men whose intelligence I was in the habit of respecting, come out from his council chamber, where he had been prating five or six hours upon no other subject than the superiority of his own genius! It is a thing not less strange than true that the *sang froid* of Napoleon was never talked of in France or any where else. His moral government of Europe has been more absolute than

PREFACE.

that of his politics. No man before him ever held such an absolute sway over the minds of so many of his kind. Rome never made people swear *per genium Cæsares* in the manner that Napoleon has done by his own. But from these extremes I shall endeavour to defend myself.

Fate had so ordered that I should be present at three events which were decisive with respect to his final career; viz. the Spanish War, the affairs of the Pope, and his invasion of Russia.

I had written an account of the transactions in Spain, but I burnt this production in a moment when a serious difference with Napoleon, convinced me of the danger attending a discovery of this work; but I believe I can trust to my memory for its re-production on some future day.

I was a member of the council which preceded, and that which was sent to Savona. I had previously penetrated into the designs of Napoleon, and I hope I shall not be accused of enhancing my own consequence when I assert that owing to the restraint I put upon the arm then raised against religion, wretched as it is, it has remained without further deterioration.

I was well seconded by Regnault de St. Jean D'Angely; and the present state of af-

fairs shall not prevent me from doing him justice. I always wished to be in a situation to write the Ecclesiastical History of France from the period of the first Concordat to that of Fontainebleau, as the most interesting part of modern history, and that of the human mind.

The invasion of Russia, which has laid the foundation of a wall of separation, is one of the most stupendous events of the last twenty-five years, and may still give birth to others, is too interesting to induce me to withhold my information respecting the sources of this great change. This I shall transfer over to history, as a guide given by truth, with a wish to enlighten the present and future ages upon an event which involves so many others. This is in reality an interesting attempt.

It is necessary that France and Europe should know how their affairs have been managed, and in what manner the mighty Colossus before whom they used to tremble has fallen to the ground.

I can do nothing better than bring Napoleon upon the stage as often as possible. He shall describe himself; the best mode of painting that I know of.

As to his character he owes it entirely to the Revolution. Respecting his mind, or what has been called his *genius*, nothing has been more celebrated, though nothing has

been less appreciated. Some thought it immense; others deemed it a pigmy; what some thought sublime others looked upon as ridiculous. At present, since the meteor has entirely disappeared, no persons seem perfectly agreed on the subject; a fact which shews how seldom it is a cool judgment with a due consideration of times, circumstances, and means, have any weight with the generality of people in forming their judgment of the characters of men. Certainly an immense weight has not pressed upon the world without containing in it some specific gravity. This brilliant military career has not been made in the absence of all the qualities that constitute the great captain. Immense labours of all kinds have not been prosecuted and completed with an inconceivable degree of constancy, without some portion of those qualifications that constitute a statesman of the first order. Still calamities the world had never experienced before, an antipathy without example; a situation in which no man had ever stood in, and lost by a succession of faults, that for their extent and obstinacy surpass any by which any other chief was ruined; a conclusion despicable on account of its baseness, and more shameful still to the world at large; to those who had paid, rather than to him who had received their adorations; such is the pro-

blem presented by a career divided between the highest flight and the lowest fall ; between the most dazzling splendour, and the most abject misery ; between the extremes of a man of the first ability and the mere driveller.

Napoleon had certainly a great mind ; but it was formed upon the Orientals.

By a natural inclination he always indulged this habit ; though notwithstanding the magnitude of his plans and purpose, he always fell into mean and pitiful details. His first proposals were invariably great ; the next, mean and contemptible. The same with respect to his mind as to his money, he was alternately mean and magnificent, penurious and prodigal. His genius resembling that of a monarch, or a mountebank, made him appear sometimes like a hero, and at other times like harlequin.

All extremes met in him : he who had commanded the Alps to abase themselves, and the Simplon to be levelled, the sea to approach or withdraw itself from his shores, concludes by delivering himself up to an English cruizer.

The whim and caprice which attached to every part of the character of Napoleon appears in that facility of speech that he received from nature ; but which from the frequency of repetition, manifestly argued a want of invention. Whenever he met with a

happy idea or expression, he would use it in conversation for several weeks together, and that with all persons indiscriminately. His mind was certainly more active than his invention; for, even in common discourse he did not possess that degree of fruitfulness necessary for an everlasting talker. With him this indulgence was of the first necessity; this he placed at the head of his prerogatives as none could interrupt him when he chose to talk alone. But if he attached so much pleasure to these eternal discourses, he also placed in them no small share of his power; as he never imagined that any person could evade the force of his rhetoric. Every enemy who thus came within his reach he flattered himself he could subdue by an irresistible charm.

Hence he neglected no opportunity to procure interviews with princes and with people of power or influence of any description, always supposing he should certainly gain them to his party. He, however, was not destitute of the charms of conversation; nor did he ever exert these more effectually than when by a kind of easy condescension, or some cordial expression of confidence, the syren, sweetening his words, and softening his voice, penetrated your heart with the appearance of opening his own. This to the hearer was the moment of

danger. One of the most striking traits in this singular character, was his facility in misplacing all his faculties and talents: the whole of these he always employed upon the object of his attention, whether this happened to be a mite or an elephant, an isolated individual, or a numerous army; and in these moments of pre-occupation, he would have borne upon one just the same as upon the other. It is true that a moment after, he seemed to have no recollection of the object that had so earnestly engaged him, when he seemed equally as ready to ruin an individual or an empire.

He had spoken and that was enough. The cloudy storm perhaps dissolved in a gentle shower. He wished for things, and forgot them like an infant. Nothing can be more singular, nor more strictly fact. I appeal to all who have known him. I heard what I have related with the intention of committing it to memory. These particulars are but few out of many—for the conduct observed in the palace of the Thuilleries was much like that in the east, where the monarchs are served but not observed.

Endowed with wonderful sagacity in the affairs of common life; not deficient in wit; quick in appreciating ideas and their connections, either new or remote; abounding in

lively and picturesque images and animated expressions, making even the incorrectness of his language subservient to his penetration; always eccentric; using sophistry and subtilty, and restless to an excess: for though a distinguished mathematician, he would never argue but upon his own ground; here he would defend either truth or error with the exactitude of a geometrician. Thus his own mistakes were multiplied to infinity; yet though he deceived others, he was more frequently the deceived than the deceiver. Hence arose that remarkable aversion which he was observed to entertain against truth: this however he did not oppose as demonstrative truth; but as some absurdity or incompatibility with that which appeared to be the truth to him. With him illusions prevailed much above falsehoods; and most of his opposition to realities arose from weakness: hence too, the terms of contempt and disdain were continually in his mouth. His optics were different from those of other men. If to these qualities we add his pride and perversion, the intoxication of success; his habit of drinking as it were out of an enchanted cup, and his giddiness in consequence of snuffing up the incense of universal flattery, we shall find a clue to the developement of the mind of a man, who joined to his whimsicalities, the

best and worst qualities to be found amongst mankind; the most of majesty in his display of sovereignty, and who was the most peremptory in his commands. If we add to these all that is base and ignoble in a character who in his greatest undertakings joined assassination to the subversion of thrones, we shall find him that kind of *Jupiter Scapin* hitherto unknown upon the theatre of the world.

The folly of Napoleon was not of that species which deranges the mental faculties, but that disorganization of ideas arising from exaggeration and bombast. Hence every thing was overdone; his commands were issued without calculation, and expences incurred without reckoning; and hence, because many obstacles were overcome, it was wisely inferred that all would give way; or rather that obstacles would cease to exist. The facility with which Napoleon had usually been obeyed, at length led him to imagine, that to make his wishes succeed, he had only to issue his orders! He had indeed reduced his system to a few forms; those of giving out his behests, and charging his Ministers to carry them into effect.

Such was the folly of Napoleon; and of this, I think I could trace its gradations, attaching its origin to the battle of Wagram;

and his marriage with the Archduchess of Austria; an epoch when probably his reason ceased to guide him, and when he no longer thought it necessary; when he abandoned himself without reserve to those exaggerations which have completely disorganized France, and terminated in his own ruin.

This succession of crimes leads me to notice a species of character in the French nation, unknown before: according to which a man, when bearing only a simple command, under a political party; and one of the mildest of the human race, becomes all at once a monster, committing and conniving at every crime, and thus exhibiting in one and the same person, the tender father, the affectionate and faithful husband, the generous friend, the humane master; but one who, nevertheless, if his politics are touched upon, at once flies off in the most opposite direction to all these good qualities. He thus tacitly blasphemes the Deity, as if he had formed the soul of two different natures; as if every thing prohibited by morality was allowable in politics. But as the evil that has been done is not that of a mere individual; it may be thought necessary to produce the rest of the criminals. The number of these we have confined as much as possible in taking measures to prevent this history from affecting any

other than their political characters; justly supposing the right of interference to be confined to this alone. Every person engaged in public life, is exposed to a kind of profit or loss with respect to history. The men I allude to would have willingly accepted my praises, let them now bear with my censure. Besides, no great forbearance can be due to those who had no regard for the honour of their nation; but wanting in this, they are amenable to all. Every person has a right to expose his own reputation at his own proper risk; but no man can suppose he has any privilege for making free with the national character. We would not disturb the ashes of French honour; but let those who from interest, vanity, or baseness of mind, have contributed to the digging of its grave; let them, I say, be cited before the tribunal of France and that of posterity; let every Frenchman who has it in his power, become a Tacitus to each modern Sejanus, or probably he may become the subject of complaint and reproach. There is some difference between the Narcisusses of Rome and those of Paris; the former did not bring the Parthians twice to the gates of that city, though the latter have twice brought all Europe into the heart of France. The Roman empire did not suffer in its greatness by the abuse which these

Romans made of their influence, whilst France, by the connivance of Napoleon's freed-men, has lost its glory, its conquests, and its political existence.

It is hoped that Frenchmen, and readers in general, may derive two advantages at least from this work: first, that the fall of Napoleon, resembling that of Phæton after setting the world on fire, will warn the ambitious not to aspire to the guidance of the chariot of the sun; and that those who think differently, will not hesitate to return the reins of these formidable coursers to their legitimate master, in imitation of their celestial prototypes, who will obey none but the Father of light. Secondly; that men should be persuaded how much it is against their own interests to open the paths of crime to the heads of nations, and thus furnish the latter with reasons for despising them. For granting that the excesses of Napoleon have been beyond example, may it not be asked whether his views of their enormity have not been diminished in consequence of the many examples of the baseness of human nature by which his objects have been seconded?

Napoleon's greatest influence has been exercised over the lowest passions of the human heart. This was a string upon which he always knew how to play. But had he not

too much reason to suppose, that these were always best disposed towards him; and that they lent themselves with little or no hesitation to any hand that offered?

Certainly his attempts would have been repulsed, had he more frequently been opposed by the impenetrable barrier of virtue and morality. He might probably have paid more respect to mankind at large, had they paid more to themselves. He himself might have put a period to his wanderings, if the unwearied patience of mankind had not taught him, that they might be safely stretched beyond all bounds.

My own experience has also taught me, that Napoleon knew how to estimate personal dignity, and that he had not sufficient hardihood to resist those who acted upon it from a principle of just resentment.

It is to be hoped, that politicians of all classes, in every country to whom the affairs of nations are entrusted, will contemplate, in the crush of the greatest power that ever existed, the just and wholesome retribution of Machiavelianism. Never was its confusion more strongly marked.

Fraud and injustice, the art of sowing divisions amongst men, and arming them against each other, had alone contributed to the elevation of a power before which we have

all trembled. The sun of justice has at length arisen upon this work of iniquity, and it has melted. A coalition, which for twenty years past, all politicians exclaimed against as morally impossible, finally arose out of the despair of nations; from the salutary apprehensions of sovereigns, and the dangers announced to the whole universe.

Virtue alone has been the cement of this unhopèd for union, though so long desired. It would have been a hundred times dissolved if it had not been held together by other ties than those of a political nature; this we are authorized to believe from too many authorities; but its grand principles were generosity, magnanimity, and a solicitude for the welfare of human nature, since which nothing has been able to resist it. Royalty has shewn itself as it is, and as it ought to be, the protectoress of humanity. It is true, the blood of the people has been shed; but it has been in the cause of justice and morality, and for the preservation of the human species, and thus being shed for the political redemption of men, it has been nobly and piously shed. This war shall therefore prevent many others; the Temple of Janus shall not be opened hereafter for any pitiful interests of mere policy. Justice and Morality alone shall guard its portals, and the universe consoled and

breathing freely after a long series of calamities, without apprehension of their return, shall erect a monument to the memory of those princes who have caused a moral and generous policy to triumph, at the foot of which the image of Machiavelianism shall appear trembling and in chains.

The Quarterly Review for 1816, speaking of this work, observes, "That its author, M. de Pradt, Archbishop of Mechlin, was in fact a considerable person, and a man of talents. He had been one of Buonaparte's attendants at Bayonne in 1808: one of his deputation to the Pope at Savona in 1811; and was afterwards attached to the imperial household in the office of Grand Almoner of France. He appears to be a person of quick epigrammatic conversation, of a speculative and sanguine disposition, and of talents not incapable of those *coups de theatre*, which, under Napoleon's regime, were considered as *coups de etat*: this qualification probably recommended him to Buonaparte, who did not perceive till he came to employ him without coadjutors, that

"Tel brille au second rang qui s'eclipse au premier."

And that he whose chief talent seems to be a power of describing, with liveliness and force, the transactions of others, may not be

equal to the conduct of great transactions himself.

“ M. De Pradt attended the Emperor to Dresden as his Almoner, and was there selected for the important office of ambassador to Poland; and in this character he had opportunities of observing his master, both in the high flow of his vanity in the outset of the invasion of Russia, and in the lowest ebb of his fortunes at its close: these opportunities, with a previous intercourse of ten years, enabled him to paint in a scattered and diffuse, but in a very striking and forcible style, the character of Buonaparte, and this portrait, in fact, constitutes the chief value of the work.”

INTRODUCTION.

THIS work was composed in the month of March, 1814, in the midst of the combats that Napoleon maintained at the gates of Paris; in the midst of the dangers to which he exposed the capital; in the midst of those to which he himself was exposed, by the opposition to a power, the fall of which, then, appeared a greater phenomenon than that of its exaltation.

It is amusing, at this time, to hear the convenient insults, and safe bravadoes, directed against the power at which these prudent assailants trembled, while the lion was roaring round the capital, and this after two successive falls that has extinguished and brought it to an end. But whilst this lion overthrew one assailant after another, and his fate was so doubtful, as to threaten his return to power, and leave those persons without an asylum, who had dared to swerve from the line of servitude chalked out for them, then probably something was due to that courage, that could look with coolness at the approaching catastrophe, and prepare the materials of a history, the loss of which would have been irreparable.

This work was not intended to see the light, till the arrival of an epoch, that circumstances alone could determine, and its publication has been refused to the pressing solicitations often made to the author, when he has read some detached parts of this history to some of the most select societies in Paris.

These motives of refusal exist no longer. When a nation has been once precipitated from the height of power and glory, into an abyss of miseries, little hesitation is used in sinking it still lower ; when no reckoning is made of engagements, or of the dignity of those with whom they are made ; of the dreadful consequences to a whole nation, or to all Europe ; or of the violation of plighted faith ; then, as if in defiance of all these considerations, an attempt is made by Napoleon, to resume that part he had played before, till he was forced to abandon it.

Under this new eruption of ambition and extravagance, the people are intoxicated with fury ; the faculties of their minds are alienated and directed towards the most odious sophisms, calculated to maintain a doctrine equally detestable, and a degree of the blackest perfidy. Thus the people are devoted to death and ruin, by the means of lies and deception, and given up without defence into the hands of enemies, drawn upon them from all parts of the universe, whilst the ordinary course of flight protects the most culpable against the evils which

he has brought upon his unhappy victims. Then, surely the time for keeping any measures with him is past; even duties have changed their nature. All obligations have ceased with respect to the author of these evils, and we have only to attend to the objects of his tyranny.

Twice has Napoleon drawn upon France and Paris, the armed population of all Europe; twice has this formidable eruption, which France has survived by a miracle, been the fruit of an ambition, that nothing could satisfy; of a perturbation of spirit, which admitted of no repose; of a presumption, too blind to be taught; of an obstinacy, that no arguments could overcome. Twice has Napoleon overturned the vessel, of which he was the pilot, without any concern for the crew, content to save himself in a gilded barge.

It is evident that Napoleon has invariably looked upon men, as so many projectiles, made to be thrown against his enemies. He shipped them on board his vessel of state, like so much ballast or lumber, which, his purpose being served, was only fit to be thrown into the sea.

Men equally rash and presumptuous, have seconded this last attempt of Napoleon against France and Europe. From a sovereign of the Island of Elba, they wished to make him sovereign of France. A degree of infatuation, equally fatal and inexplicable, was manifested in his favour from

one end of France to the other ; the result of the fascination of the passions ; but which dispersed on the appearance of clearer light, and those representations which none before had the courage to make to the eyes of the public, exhibiting a succession of scenes, which in consequence of the witchery of theatrical management, were not even supposed to have had any existence previous to their exposure.

A witness to the facts which I have retraced, a principal actor in some of these important scenes, the author would think himself wanting in contributing to the cure of a great nation, if he were any longer to withhold his knowledge of an order of things, the manifestation of which, is of a nature to dissipate a part of the illusions and the prejudices upon which the first empire of Napoleon over France was founded ; and of which he also availed himself in his second attempt.

It is hard to say whether folly or wickedness preponderated in this fatal enterprize. It was evident that Napoleon had no means of supporting this contest ; and that even a mere successful resistance than that of Waterloo could not have prolonged his power beyond July ; and that conqueror, or conquered, in less than three months, he would have regretted his leaving Elba.

Possibly the measures I took for retarding this publication, may have contributed to the retention of a number of persons in those errors, who might

have been disabused and preserved from the danger of throwing themselves into the arms of a man, who could evidently do nothing more for France, than present her with the resentment of the whole world. Still, as long as the author of so many evils has any partisans, it is the duty of every man to endeavour to recal them; the healing of these diseased persons, is of the first importance to the health of society at large; for, otherwise, it is a certainty that they will never cease to disturb its order.

This work having been written in March, 1814, it was necessary, when speaking of Napoleon, to adopt the denominations then in use. To have styled him Buonaparte in 1812, would have been as much out of place, as to call him the Emperor at present. Names do not confer any rights; they are no more than convenient designations of things positive and existing. They are given to be understood. This observation will be comprehended by those for whom it is intended; others, surely, in the appellations I have used, will see nothing more than we ourselves have seen; on one side they will not suppose any rights incompatible with the subject, any more than undue favour or affection towards the other.

NARRATIVE OF AN EMBASSY, &c.

IN one of those profound reveries to which the Emperor was subject, the following exclamation was heard to escape him, *one man less, and I should have been master of the world.* Who then is the man who in some degree partaking of the power of the Divinity, could have said to this imperial torrent, *Non ibis amplius*: no further shalt thou proceed? Where was his arms, his treasures, and his means to arrest this proud despot of France and Europe, who upon the wrecks of thrones, nations, and laws, one foot in blood, and the other upon ruins, darted in idea towards the limits of the world, panting as it were for the dominion of the universe?

This man was myself; and could this be granted, I have saved the world; and I might then presume that its gratitude will never be equal to the benefit conferred; however, far be it from me to claim this pre-eminence.

This exclamation of the Emperor Napoleon; the allegations a thousand times repeated that I did not perform my mission, by an expression familiar to this sovereign, similar to those of the heads of the Revolution, who have at the same time exhausted their language and their ideas; all these imputations I say are absolutely destitute of foundation. The

proofs of this shall soon be adduced ; but in reality these accusations ought to be attributed, first, to the disposition of a prince, who having placed his own infallibility among the most rigorous axioms of geometry, was by no means inclined to impute the miscarriage of his enterprises to himself. This was always the case, particularly in his first reverse, which made the deepest impression. This reverse, which astonished his own self-love, did not permit him to come to any explanation of his conduct ; but only to criminate the persons who concurred with him in the undertaking. One scape goat at least was necessary ; and he, who could have pointed him out, did not chuse to name himself.

The failures were also imputable to the little attention that the Emperor paid to circumstances that passed about him, as well as to the want of the advice of persons in his suite, and whose duty it was to have offered their advice.

The Emperor is profoundly ignorant ; the natural restlessness of his mind is such as to carry him habitually into speculations of every kind, without permitting him to acquire the necessary information. He dreams or speaks ; signs state papers and reads nothing ; his loquacity extends to every thing ; but investigates nothing. It is sufficient to see him read a book, &c. to form an idea of his mind and manner ; the leaves fly beneath his fingers ; he just glances over the pages, and in a very short time the poor writer is almost always rejected with some mark of contempt, or some of the common expressions of disdain. Stuff ! nonsense ! chimeras ! a constituent ! a jansenist ! This last word is the *maximum* of his

reproaches. With his head constantly in the clouds, his flight is always towards the empyreum; from this point of elevation, he undertakes to view the earth with the eye of an eagle, and when he descends, to walk over it like a giant.

Certainly, knowledge is not to be acquired in this manner among weak mortals. This is nothing more or less than knowing things in the mass; or rather the way to know nothing as it should be known. Hence the Emperor was unacquainted both with men and things in France. He brought on events, and drew them after him; but he was ignorant of the consequences. Some sketches, some traits of discernment, some flashes of memory, nearly constituted the whole fund of his information, in the same manner as a few pamphlets composed the whole of his library. It was necessary to be near him, and above all, to have travelled with him, to form any idea of the ignorance that occasionally gave birth to some very pleasant mistakes with respect to men; as well as the grossest ideas of things, I have witnessed these upon more than one occasion; and in proper time and place I shall produce some striking examples of them.

The Emperor never loses sight of an idea of his own. This is a kind of chace from which nothing can turn him as long as it occupies his mind, every thing else is lost upon him; wonderful indeed, though much at odds in appearance to the genius and reputation of the French government, any agent of which, provided he opposes no obstacle to the Emperor's views, may be in a manner independent under the sway of the most violent despotism, and commit as

many follies as he pleases, with impunity, just in the same manner as he may do good without attracting any notice.

All this is extremely singular, and may appear new to many people; and they may protest against such criticism as the mania of imagination; but if they will condescend to recollect that all this happened under the empire of Napoleon, no further illustration will be needful.

The numerous objects which the Emperor glories in embracing, under the idea of an imperious necessity, has formed, and always will form an invincible obstacle to his intimate knowledge of any thing, or to his passing a mature judgment of things in detail. But with Napoleon, and in the French empire, every thing is seen in masses; individuality is too small and trivial for the notice of these great men; these superior geniusses who have only need to skim the surface of things. All their portraits are mere sketches; and from these, more or less vague, they form their judgment of mankind. A single trait forms a character, and they have no time to bestow more than one of these upon each portrait.

A government of this kind should have nothing about it subject to the vicissitudes of time. To grant and to accept are measures of brevity; but woe to those persons, who, to justify themselves, have need of time, that universal agent of all things here below. If we trace the revolutionary government to its origin, we shall find, that frequently assailed by storms and hurricanes, it has been shaken, overturned, and displaced, without any of those resources, which in other places, are the safeguards of suffering huma-

nity. France, distracted and abased, had become an object regarded without astonishment and without pity, by its numerous assailants, whilst he by whom she had been overthrown, was pursuing his course, leaping and bounding at random over those whom he had elevated or ruined. Thus has France been condemned to exhaust the remains of a degraded existence, in the agonizing attempts of desperation, or otherwise to seek for that reparation which chance rather than remorse might possibly afford. Unhappy indeed is that nation where indifference looks on, and events are left to take their own course.

This kind of dreadful distraction attaching itself to the immensity of the affairs of France, and especially to its undue extent, is one of the greatest scourges that has pressed upon this unhappy nation.

I have already observed, that the means of information were withheld from the Emperor by those very persons whose first duty it was always to preserve those channels open; still it must be acknowledged, that he only suffered from an inconvenience mostly of his own creation. Two counsellors only were always suffered to approach him, and grew with his strength; namely, terror and flattery. These were his guards and his advisers, though it was impossible for these to insure him either safety or information. All the talents, all the exertions of those admitted into his presence, were compelled to bear upon one single point; to guess at his meaning, and to render it intelligible to others. This was the acme of all their acquisitions.

An exception may nevertheless be made in favour of two ministers, whom Napoleon in the plenitude

of his power, thought he might dispense with, merely on account of those qualifications which ought to have rendered them the more estimable. He felt himself incommoded by their rising fame, and that independence of mind which they had preserved amidst the general servility. He dreaded their aspiring to a participation in the glory he had acquired; this was the real cause of their disgrace. He could not bear the approximation of any talent without servility. Napoleon had formed a project, unknown to mankind from the earliest ages of society, that of governing without advisers, that of proscribing all counsel. I have heard him furiously exclaiming, *Des Conseils a moi ! Des Conseils !* But the want of advice was his ruin: probably had he retained those two men which his good fortune had brought about him, he might still have shone with that eclat which he began to lose from the moment they left him. The pleasure of domineering over men of middling talents, of governing at his ease, and making them feel the weight of his superiority; this pitiful indulgence has cost him dear: he has paid for it with the loss of his crown, which would have been no great calamity, if this had not also cost France all that was most precious, its blood, its honour, its riches, and its rank among nations.

— Thus did the Emperor repel every kind of information which did not immediately assimilate with his own ideas; and then his displeasure was always attended with such an inundation of violence and abuse, that it could not but operate as a sufficient warning to every observer, never to offer him any thing he was not predisposed to receive.

Terror and flattery may be said to have been two centinels that continually watched over him ; so that as no wholesome advice could possibly reach him, he resembled that Sultan, who having pronounced the punishment of death upon any person who should dare to suggest the possibility of his decease, absolutely fell a sacrifice to his own precautions, because the physicians being intimidated, would not venture to mention the malady he laboured under.

The injustice of Napoleon's complaint is therefore evident. With the remorse which he may have brought upon himself, I have nothing to do, I must confine myself to those important consequences which have arisen from the abortion of his schemes, and to those which may yet result from them in the present and future ages ; but I may be permitted to repeat, that I should never have mentioned the office I executed under him, and of which I should have been ashamed, had it not owed its existence to the malignancy and the disorder of the head of its author.

Nothing was farther from my ideas than that indefatigable application of which I have been an instrument, under a man whose turbulent activity knew no repose ; a man, who raised from the lowest order of society, to an eminence unequalled before, and that by a nation who only asked him to heal the wounds with which they were covered. This man thought of nothing but enlarging these wounds, and to render them incurable ; and who, whilst he aspired to pass for the restorer of religion, and borrowed its aid on all occasions, was nevertheless its most bitter enemy. This man dragging its venerable chief from dungeon to dungeon, chained the very hands who had con-

separated his impious front with the sign only reserved for that of kings. This man, who had been raised to the head of monarchies, thought of nothing but the humiliation and subjugation of kings ; and who dispensing kingdoms and thrones, at the same time destroyed royalty by those changes, which were calculated to degrade every kind of dignity. Thus Napoleon made and unmade kings ; and this man carried into every act of sovereignty, such a degree of the spirit of contradiction, despotism, and inconsistency, as to outrage all around him, by the wanton display of the greatest power that ever existed ; incessantly occupied in destroying the works of its own hands ; in setting up for the purpose of pulling down ; in hazarding every thing for the indulgence, the fancies of a day, whilst these were only the prelude to an eternal succession of them.

Is there a being endowed with sense or reason, who has not, a thousand times, groaned under those continual eruptions of anger thrown out every moment from this volcano, covering one with flame, and another with mire, shaking and overturning every thing within its reach ; and like Etna or Vesuvius, overwhelming trees and plants, with its lava ; or reducing them to ashes, and destroying, indiscriminately, both root and bud ?

What man, with any consistent ideas of policy or morals, could have applauded those convenient invasions, in which taking England as an example, Napoleon once declared, that Rome belonged to him, as a descendant from Charlemagne, upon the principle, that no man could reign under the authority of a priest ? He inferred, that as the first

hero had been a soldier of fortune, it was necessary that every king should be a soldier.

Another time, taking a pen in his hand, he traced out his empire, as extending from the Scheldt to the shores of the Baltic; including in this space, the territories of those princes, who first learnt from the *Moniteur*, that they had been struck out of the list, like so many clerks, and who, under the new title of *Princes froissés*, were to receive no recompense, but an imaginary indemnification, subject to endless adjournments.

What man, under the influence of reason, or even of decency, has not a hundred times revolted at the painful sensations, occasioned by the insolence and bad faith of Napoleon, and at the sophistry and derision which so frequently accompanied them?—These, with contempt, is to every honest man, the most insupportable. I allude to the announcements in the *Moniteur*, which for so many years past, had been the pillory upon which Napoleon had equally exposed kings, ministers, and every man bold enough to contradict him. Upon this pillory, at once the depository of his sublime thoughts, his lowest reproaches, and his blustering menaces, has been affixed in striking characters, during the last ten years, the decrees, carrying with them the dethronement of every prince, who had sufficient temerity to permit the purchase of an ell of English cloth; or to allow of any point of contact with a nation, cut off by his authority alone, from all the rest of Europe, whilst he himself, was in the habit of issuing hundreds of licenses, authorizing his subjects to trade with the English.

There is no Frenchman, who entertains a proper idea of his own interests, but must deplore this aggregation of heterogenous elements, in a pretended fraternity, in which the affinities, created by brute force, that supported it, were infinitely outnumbered by the antipathies of natural repulsion. Who could not but sigh in beholding so many new interests, often incompatible with themselves, sharing that attention, which ought to have been bestowed upon the country? All the time lost upon the Romans, the Hollanders, and the Hamburgers, was, in a manner, stolen from each Frenchman; who, in placing Napoleon at the head of his affairs, did not imagine he was to concern himself with those of the whole world. Most certainly this was the sense of the eighteenth of Brumaire.

I will now return to my subject, and state the true causes of the failure of my embassy to Poland, for the sake of uniting the French and Poles, in a common effort against Russia, and therein of the ruinous effects that followed. The causes of this failure, were as follow:—1. The Emperor Napoleon. 2. The Duke of Bassano. 3. The Poles themselves. 4. The excellent defensive system of the Russians. 5. The general delirium and mistaken views of the French cabinet throughout the whole business. 6. The separation of Lithuania from the Duchy of Warsaw, and the answer of the Emperor at Wilna, to the deputation of the Diet. 7. The special instructions of the Duke of Bassano to me, not to involve myself in politics, but to confine my attentions to procuring subsistence for the army.

This series of events, this mass of facts constituted

the true cause of the failure of the expedition, and not that, which the malignant pride of Napoleon, in his random mode of pronouncing his flippant judgment, has been pleased to impute to me.

Here a very important question presents itself. Who was the author of the Russian war? Public opinion has imputed it to Napoleon; but his partizans, his toad-eaters, and his agents, both volunteers and hirelings, have strained every nerve, to persuade the world, that this quarrel originated entirely with Russia, and that Napoleon acted only the defensive. The Duke of Bassano repeated this at Warsaw, upon his return from Wilna, with that appearance of conviction and self-satisfaction, which the world knows he possesses on most occasions.

According to the line of duty which I have prescribed to myself, as highly necessary at the present period, rather than dilate upon other subjects, I shall confine myself to relations best calculated to form a clue to the labyrinths of a history hitherto obscure. A discussion, closely connected with the Emperor's personal conduct, upon facts not generally known, though very interesting in themselves, and well suited to the illustration of his character, is the principal object of these pages.

From his birth to the period of his elevation to the throne, Napoleon has cherished the wish of lording it over the world. At both ends of the ladder he has been still the same; the same when a poor isolated and obscure character, as when he became one of the most distinguished and powerful sovereigns. In situations thus different, he has never ceased to dream of thrones and dominion; of

infinite and unceasing ascension ; of the agitation of states, political catastrophes, &c. these have been the constant nourishment of his mind, equally with Machiavel, his sole instructor. His stomach always rejected every other aliment ; and hence condemning the most eminent writers in a mass, he observed to M. Jacobi, " Tacitus is a writer of romances ; Gibbon is a declaimer ; Machiavel is the only book one can read." In fact, these are the first words I heard him utter, at one of the levees at which I was present, on the 9th of September, 1804, after having been presented to him in the morning.

Of the progress he has made under his master, Machiavel, we have been sufficient witnesses. " There are two tottering thrones," said he, " that require my support, that of Constantinople and Persia." This was in 1794, when he was neglected, soon after his services in the siege of Toulon.

I have likewise been told by a general, who was present at a council of war, held to consider of the attack on that city, that he spoke in a tone so high and commanding, that he might have been taken for an accredited general of long service, rather than a novice just entering upon his career.

Marshal Duroc informed me, that coming suddenly to the camp in Italy, in 1796, he kept the generals and all those about him, at the same distance, as if he had been amongst his guards at the Louvre.

Another time, asking the marshal, my friend and relation, who had better opportunities of knowing Napoleon's disposition than many others, whether the report was to be credited, of the Emperor's in-

tention to take the crown of Italy upon himself; "Yes," said he, "and that without any scruple."

A short time after his entry into Milan, subsequent to the battle of Lodi, a foreign minister, from whom I received the anecdote, suggesting to him, the opening which fortune had made for him, and that his services might be rewarded with the Duchy of Milan, he observed, there was a finer throne than that vacant.

The taste, the appetite, for royalty, has, therefore, been innate in Napoleon. With him, to reign is every thing, and for this he would sacrifice the world without hesitation or remorse.

It is evident to what extremes such a disposition as this would lead a man, from the moment he may be possessed of power. This is to him the lever of Archimedes, which, wants nothing but a point or rest to move the world. Thus tracing the steps of Napoleon, we shall find he has never deviated for one moment, from this line of ascending progression.

The general of the thirteenth of Vendemaire, was made by Barrere, the general of the army of Italy; the latter, the dictator of this army, became, under him, the centre of the French armies, the negociator of Leoben, of Campo Formio, of Tolentino; a chief in the eyes of the directory, and a source of hope to the French people.

From this time, Egypt became the object suited to his first wish of sovereignty, for his conduct there was that of a monarch; this country he thought might serve him, as an asylum, in case of need. Hence his project for the overthrow of the Ottoman empire, and for establishing himself in Asia Minor;

and this was the real object of his expedition to St. Jean D'Acre.

— In September, 1804, he observed to me, at Mentz, “that there had been nothing to do in Europe, for the last two hundred years;” “the east,” said he, “is the only theatre for grand undertakings.” I have heard him repeating this sentiment a hundred times, and complaining of the civilization of Europe, as an obstacle to his designs.

A mind viewing politics upon such an extended scale, must of necessity expand in proportion, and become more or less disgusted with the usual routine of affairs, which it would willingly exchange for the purpose of soaring in the regions of imagination, amongst systems of its own creation. Thus his *crescendo* is apparent; and that he could never rest in any one situation which he had attained. This Consul of ten years, subjugated, and even nullified his colleagues; with the tribunals also he annihilated the constitution, and then made himself Consul for life. When he had taken his measures, he elevated himself upon the throne he had so long coveted, and which he decorated with a more splendid title, only with a view of placing himself still higher, and being seen at a greater distance.

Afterwards burthening himself with a new crown in Italy, he aggrandized this kingdom with the spoils of the petty states still remaining; those of Austria in the Venetian territory, and those of Naples, which he retained as an usufruct for his brother. The territory of Prussia he removed to a distance still further, and in the midst of unproductive ruins. Upon a new throne, in the heart of Germany, he

raised his brother from America. Under the pretext of establishing these new kingdoms, he peopled Germany with grand feudatories, to whom he sold their new dignities, at the price of every personal consideration, both with respect to the blood, the wealth, the habits, and even the happiness of their subjects. From this period, the tranquillity of the north and east of Europe was no more. In consequence of the most execrable treachery ever known, after having invaded Tuscany, he made Portugal the scene of misery. Spain, as he told me at Valladolid, he intended to divide into five large viceroyalties, and as a prelude to this, he established his intendants in Catalonia and Valencia. Next followed the atrocious expulsion of the Pope, and the attribution of the nominal sovereignty to the first born of his race, as king of Rome; the scandalous expulsion of his own brother from the kingdom of Holland, the despoilation of Westphalia, deprived of part of its revenues by the invasion of Lower Germany and the Hanseatic towns; and lastly, the seizure of these countries, that, without reason or ceremony, he chose to annex to the French empire; and which, under no pretence whatever, could be supposed to have any connection with France. This series of invasions, which necessarily led to others, throws the strongest light imaginable upon the assertion that Napoleon never lost sight of his intention to make himself master of the world. He wished to treat the world as he had treated France, of which he was the tyrant from the very moment he became its master; and he could no more brook a contradiction in one place than in another. The man, who

in the most serious debates with the greatest powers in Europe, could treat their ambassadors as he treated his own chamberlains or the members of his own legislative body, could not possibly exist with any like a rival or an equal about him. The world could not support two masters, and Napoleon, like Alexander the Great, could not submit to be second in command. Napoleon betrayed himself by the exclamation he made use of relative to his ambitious designs. In this he exposed his most secret intentions; those intentions which he had endeavoured to conceal under so many perfidious pretences. When to deceive the more effectually, he descended so far as to assume the tone of good nature; or when he said, "One man less, and I should have been master of the world," is it possible to misapprehend his object? I was present at the audience a few days before his departure for Russia, and when the bishops from Savona were also present, he made use of these words, "After I have terminated the business in hand, and two or three other projects which I have in my head, (rubbing his forehead) there shall be twenty popes in Europe, and every one shall have his share." The conversation had been upon the Pope's affairs, and this threw some light upon his intended removal of the pontiff to Fontainebleau.

Some days after my return from Savona, in November 1811, the Emperor detained me after his levee, as he had frequently done for a year past. At the conclusion of a long conversation, in which he had been pleasing himself with the details of his journey to Holland, he said to me, in a transport

of ambitious intoxication, "In five years I shall be master of the world, Russia alone remains; but I shall crush Russia." (He frequently used a gesture correspondent with this threat,) then renewing the conversation, he several times said, "Paris shall come to St. Cloud. I will build fifteen ships of the line every year; and I will not put to sea till I have a hundred and fifty: I shall then also be master of the seas, and all commerce must of course pass through my hands. I will not import a pound more than I export. I will exchange million for million." This, his curious idea of commerce, I had developed from the period of his journey to Spain. He frequently returned to the idea that he should be master of the world, and that Paris should extend to St. Cloud. I cannot resist the pleasure of publishing the remains of this curious conversation, though rather foreign to the subject of this narrative.

The emperor, on his return from Holland, was enchanted, but that which tickled him the most, was the idea that the Hollanders were fond of his regulations: "They know," said he, and I heard him repeat it at least ten times; "they know that I did not furnish my chateau at Fontainebleau all at once." What flatterer had furnished him with this ridiculous bait for his self-love, I know not; but I have learnt from persons whose veracity cannot be called in question, that nothing could equal the reproaches that his commercial intermeddling had produced among the Hollanders, and especially as these had been dictated in such a magisterial tone by him who was only trying his crude conceptions

against the experience of these patriarchs of commerce. It was on one of these occasions, when Napoleon said he should have two hundred ships of war to oppose the English, one of the auditors replied "yes, he should have six hundred." This answer, however, was repaid with a look of contempt, but in cases of dissent this is his ordinary mode of replying.

As to Napoleon's innate inclination for thrones and dominion, it is not exclusively his own; it runs in the blood of the family. Joseph, Jerome, Louis, the grand Duchess, so ingeniously named the Semiramis of Lucca, equally partake of the mania for sitting upon thrones; they sigh for sovereignty alone, they desire no other honour. There is scarcely a member of this strange family who does not fancy himself destined to reign and command to all eternity, and who looks upon the privation of a throne as the violation of all right, human and divine; and that their reign is indispensibly necessary to the happiness of the people. It is vain that the world rejects them with disgust; they still look upon themselves as sovereigns legitimate, and necessarily so by an imperscriptible right. He who is able may explain that facility with which Napoleon's family have forgotten every past transaction, in order that they alone may look forward; but this disposition pervades the whole of them. Joseph imagines that all the wealth of France would be well employed in re-establishing him upon the throne of Spain. The blood of two millions of Spaniards, who died to expel him, cries to him in vain; he is deaf to this as much as to those whom

his madness has left to breathe upon this land of desolation, who equally reject him. On the other hand, France, of which he is ignorant, knows nothing of him but by the reports of his luxury, and that ruin that he has brought upon every throne which he has attempted. In vain would she give him to understand that enough of French blood has been shed to make him master of a nation who would rather perish than accept him. We know the measures which were found necessary to induce him to sign his abdication of that ridiculous and atrocious royalty of Spain. Louis also, was not less spoiled by his short-lived sovereignty in Holland; in vain does France, Holland, and Europe at large, declare him fallen; he still looks upon himself as king of Holland by the grace of God, and in the administration of his household, retains the shadow of sovereignty, the most ridiculous in the world. Jerome, next to Napoleon, is he in whom the most ardent thirst for dominion remains: he really expected to have been king of Poland.

The same inclination prevails in the highest degree among some of the females of this family. The grand Duchess would hold a very distinguished rank among those of her sex, marked by the voracity of their ambition. She is *Agrippina*, always ready to adopt the motto of her mind, *Occidat modo imperet*. Let us reign if we perish. And in respect to this propensity, the queen of Naples does not yield to any.

But in this family the lust of power has not produced the effects observable among others who have made rapid advances in an elevated career. It has

neither called forth great actions nor great virtues ; it has not proved a germ from which eminent qualities have developed themselves, and which generally distinguish aspiring minds. No ; individually none have been more devoid of bright parts ; none more common ; none more *terre a terre* than these candidates for, and retainers of thrones. The only qualification they plead, is their relation to their brother. The moment he became a sovereign, they thought it necessary they should become sovereigns also ; and with claims from this affinity, they never ceased to harrass him ; and we know the tart reply that Napoleon made to the demand of one of these domestic kings, " Will not people say that I have prevented you from being the successor of the late king, our father ? "

The high and mighty ambition of the emperor, has since absorbed all these subalterns, who were formed about him like satellites attending the orb of their principal planet. Yet, whilst they administered to his ambition, they imagined they could make it conducive to their own ; nor were they less active in this subordinate state, nor by any means less disposed to grasp at every thing within their reach. Thus we may see the cost they have already been to Europe, and which may still be increased.

The regular plan laid down by the Emperor for the successive conquest of different parts of Europe, the periods of which we have already noticed, having led him to the frontiers of Russia, and brought about the interview at Erfurt, the conquest of Finland, the war of 1813 against Austria, and that which was then carrying on against Turkey, were

all so many means of involving, deceiving, and throwing Russia off her guard till the moment when Napoleon was permitted to approach her with security. Never was plan conceived and managed with more art and persevering industry, or with a degree of perfidy more consummate.

At length the period arrived when what was called the Emperor's system was to be fully extended to the point for which it had been so long designed. Upon this system I shall make a few remarks. This prince had established himself in the centre of Europe as in a domain made for his purposes, and in which he might freely deliver himself up to his chimerical speculations. Every state overturned, and every new invasion made part of this system, and was connected with that general wish, which, if not in his plan, was always adopted if it could be made subservient to his grand object. But though it could not be said that he had any fixed rules, he always availed himself of existing circumstances, and of any oversight in his enemies, especially of the want of firmness in any of the parties with whom he had to do; but he never had, nor ever will have any regular plan either in war or politics. His mind is at enmity with any kind of regularity; the facility he has every where found, has enabled him to seize many advantages, and to arrange them at his leisure. All Europe appears to him like an old mansion in ruins, where one repair only introduces another, in order to bring the whole into any kind of symmetry. This idea naturally leads to the demolition of the edifice, and this, according to the Emperor's system, includes the conquest of Europe as a means

of completing the changes projected and half achieved. This is what might be heard every moment from the mouths of those who were about the Emperor: "the Emperor's system, the Emperor's plan, the Emperor's views," have resounded in my ears for these ten years past. This plan or system was supposed to embrace various objects; some said Constantinople; some said Poland; others trembled at Paris, because Finland had been reunited to Russia. Every one spoke and acted with the "Emperor's system" in view; and however they differed in other respects, to this system they looked as the common centre.

The Emperor deceived himself; he attempted to conceal his views by presenting sometimes one scheme of general politics, and sometimes another; but he had but one, and that was to become master of Europe. The Moniteurs, those living archives of his designs, had long panegyricized the idea of having only two great powers in Europe, France and Russia, as worthy of the most profound genius. Other powers of inferior consequence were to have been so managed between them as to deaden the blows which the great ones might receive from any casual approximation.

Such a war against Russia as would drive her back to Asia, was afterwards a common expression; this was continually sprouting in Napoleon's ideas, and only waiting the period when it might be cultivated with effect. Russia was then to be treated in the manner intended for England for more than twenty years past. An axiom laid down by the French diplomatic body was the echo of the cabinet

of St. Cloud; this was, that England, as an insular power, ought to be excluded from any interference in the affairs of the Continent. These great politicians seem to have derived their doctrine, applied to the nineteenth century, from Virgil. They supposed that because this poet had said,

Et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos,

that the English of our days should hold themselves as really and lawfully excluded from the Continent; the *Moniteur* has cited this opinion a thousand times.

This doctrine was reversible in Russia; but these grave logicians concluded, that because Russia was situated far in the northern latitudes; and because it was not advanced so far in civilization, nor so rich as France in academies of every kind, and on account of the advantage of being neighbours to the Chinese and the Tartars, she ought to confine herself to this vicinity, though they would willingly permit her to interfere with the Turks and Persians, whom France abandoned as it suited its interests. This doctrine was heard at every levee in Paris, those infallible indicators of the projects prepared at the *Thuilleries*; and this was the part which the diplomatic wiseacres of Paris assigned to Russia. It was neither necessary to have lived there many days, nor to have much conversation with any intelligent persons to remove any doubt on this head.

Already, in the winter of 1811, great movements were observed among the troops in Germany, evidently directed against Russia. At the opening of the legislative body in the same year, Napoleon acknowledged that the preparations for the war with

Russia had added one hundred millions of livres to the expences of the war department. In the same sitting he announced that the war in Spain would terminate in a clap of thunder; and that a priest, meaning the Pope, should no longer exercise the power of a sovereign; though but a few years before, he himself had created the primacy of Ratisbon. He thought, no doubt, that this clap of thunder was to come from him, but little did he foresee, that the sovereign pontiff would resume his throne in his son's nominal kingdom.

The continual occupation of the Prussian fortresses, the accumulation of military provisions in Dantzic, the assemblage of French troops between the Oder and the Vistula, were the preparatory means of the war he had in view; and the redoubled severity of his custom-house officers in devising fresh measures not to leave Russia any means of relief from a necessity of trade increasing every day were not without serious consequences. Napoleon, after invading Pomerania, occupied Mecklenburg, and under the idea of protection against the English (the common pretext) lined the shores of the Baltic with his troops. Napoleon then passed the Rhine, the Ems, the Weser, the Elbe, the Trave, and fixing himself at Lubec, made no secret of his intention to establish a grand maritime arsenal there; that this was intended to overawe the three crowns of the north, and the whole of the gulph of Finland is as clear as the day.

Is there then a child whom any one would attempt to persuade, that the Emperor Alexander (who is mildness and candour itself) began the war: that he

attacked Napoleon, who is violence and perfidy personified? That Russia, always unsuccessful in war against France, who had every thing to hazard and nothing to gain, would wantonly attack such a Colossus as France then was? Who could suppose that the excellent Prince Kourakin played the part of a political tartuffe with the Duke of Bassano; and that it was he, who for the first and last part of his life, like the satyr, blew hot and cold out of the same mouth?

Hence it was, that the numbers of the *Moniteur* which contained the forms of the negociation were received with laughter and contempt. On the part of Russia it was evident there was good faith scrupulously attached to the maintenance of an alliance, though manifestly unequal: on the other, a laboured research after the means of bringing on a rupture; at the same time, artfully concealing the tendency towards this result.

When Russia confined herself to a demand of the evacuation of Prussia as the means of establishing a barrier between the two empires, could any one censure a proposal so moderate as bearing any semblance with aggression? Napoleon, with the cunning generally used in his publications, certainly did object to this demand, and by a perversion of the sense, used it to excite the indignation of his army; but there is no man of common sense who may not recollect, that from the beginning of the Revolution all his chiefs, as well as Napoleon himself, have never suffered any opportunity to escape them when it furnished them with the means of at-

tributing their own crimes to those persons whom they made their victims.

It was from this principle that in the early stages of the Revolution they said it was the Aristocrats, who burnt their *chateaux* merely for the pleasure of calumniating the Revolution, and that the Archbishop of Paris indemnified the owners: thus all the Revolutionists have possessed much the same genius, morals, and talents. Of late also, these people have cried out against violating the independence of France on the part of those who would not support Bonaparte, because they well knew that France would not long respect the rights and independence of other nations, but rather lend itself for the violation of that contract by which Bonaparte had engaged to reign over France no longer. Thus, in the inversion of the true sense of every engagement, a great nation has been plunged into a delirium, and into ruin, as the necessary consequence.

It must be confessed, that since the peace of Tilsit, so pregnant with the seeds of future war almost every thinking man has seen the cloud increase from which the storm was at length to burst. They have even marked the progress of its maturity, and pointed out the epoch when peace could no longer exist. It was demonstrable to them, that the commerce of England would be the subject of the next dispute. Napoleon they knew would push his anti-continental system in the Baltic to the utmost, and that Russia would have no choice, but either to resist at all hazards, or receive French garrisons from Riga to Archangel. These were no secrets at Paris. The general conversation respecting Poland at this time

was calculated to convince any person how far the war was or was not inevitable on the part of France. The duchy of Warsaw was the only obstacle: In Europe the whole of the comedy turned upon this secret. I was informed of this by the Emperor himself at Dresden; in fact he might have spared this information; as I had not been under the necessity of waiting for it till then. Out of two hundred and four dispatches sent to me from M. Bignon, at Warsaw, which formed the whole of his correspondence, more than one hundred of these exhibit his real views relative to Poland. Long before this period, at Bayonne, in April, 1808, I heard the Emperor complain of the three Polish senators from Warsaw, for being guilty of precipitation, and exposing themselves too much to Russia, and he advised them to check their impatience. No vast penetration is necessary to discover his meaning on this account. For a long time past the Poles have repeatedly told me, that they had the Emperor's word for their emancipation.

I shall cite one more instance in support of the publicity of the hostility of Napoleon, in respect to Russia.

On the 20th of August, 1811, returning from the levee at St. Cloud, where I had been to take leave of him, at the moment of my departure for Savona, a young officer who had a place in the new court, requested me to return with him to Paris. I had for several years past been in the habit of talking with him upon the affairs of France, and at the court of Napoleon; ah, said he, war with Russia on the first of September! I marked this trait; but in endea-

NARRATIVE OF AN EMBASSY

vouring to temper his zeal, I demonstrated to him, without much difficulty, that this enterprize could not be brought to maturity before the first of May. At the same time I could not help admiring the presumptuous folly of a young man, who in consequence of his opportunity of knowing some things, should undertake to announce a war with Russia, and suppose its commencement at the very period when it ought to conclude! However, this was one of the young sages, who, from the nature of his office, was called upon to take a part in the government of the State.

During the winter of 1811-12, Paris resounded with reports, menaces, and preparations for war against Russia. Paris was a place of arms, and a passage for troops collecting from all parts for the expedition. The Poles were sent for from Spain; the imperial guard had left Paris; the contingents of the confederation of the Rhine were all in motion, and only waiting for the rising of the sun upon a more elevated horizon as the signal for battle. Here a few observations may be permitted; and first the similarity of Napoleon's conduct towards the Emperor Alexander, and the unfortunate Prince of Asturias. To take by surprize was his object in both cases. Previously to Napoleon's expedition to Spain, he circulated a hundred different reports, as to its destination, the siege of Gibraltar, the occupation of a part of the coast of Africa, to intercept the passage of the Mediterranean, &c. The unfortunate court of Spain never knew its fate, till it was too late to arrest the rapid course of the invader. The first intimation of Napoleon's intentions they learned from *Esquierdo*, an agent attached to the Prince of Peace.

In order to deceive Russia, respecting the destination of the French armies during the whole winter, the most ridiculous stories were fabricated about founding new colonies, heaven only knew where; and accordingly the collection of a great number of artists, gardeners, mechanics, &c. were talked of to join the expedition; as was also the removal of a great quantity of costly vestments from the imperial wardrobe. All these reports were merely made to mislead the public as to the real object. To this also the protestations, the caresses, and the official lies at Paris and Petersburg, are to be imputed. It was only at the moment of action that the Duke of Bassano left Paris, without notice, leaving Prince Kourakin to his conjectures, whilst waiting for the promised rendezvous, and his passports, which were withheld as long as possible. Things were carried thus far, merely to lull all kind of apprehension; with this view also the Count de Narbonne was sent to Wilna, and General Lauriston was placed about the person of the Emperor Alexander, but he had too much judgment to be imposed upon.

As in Spain, so in Russia, Napoleon had a double part to play. In Russia he wished to take the army by surprize, and crush it at one blow: he also flattered himself with the hopes of seizing the person of Alexander. His taste for finishing his disputes with kings in this manner, originated in Spain; though the price he had paid for making this experiment had by no means cured him of this vice, he rather flattered himself with the notion, that in Russia he should be able to indemnify himself for the losses he had sustained by the Spaniards. This he told

me in his conference at Dresden, as will presently appear.

The Emperor had laboured so much to conceal his real intentions, as to have preparations made for his actual reception at Warsaw; but that his real destination would only be known at Posen, was held as no secret by the Duke of Bassano, when at breakfast at the house of Count de Senft, on the morning of my departure from Dresden. To a person present, who asked him if it was true that the Emperor was going to Warsaw, he observed, "There is much talk of it," this was a kind of watch-word to the French, and those of his party.

To do away every idea of aggression against Russia, was a principal part of Napoleon's chimerical plan to which he was so fondly attached. Can it be credited, that even within three or four days of his departure, and when he had 400,000 men already in Poland, and after his household had been gone some time, and when the business of several of the electoral colleges had been postponed on account of his approaching departure, that he could throw himself into one of his ordinary fits of passion, and gave full vent to his usual terms of reproach. "What," said he, to a foreigner of distinction, who offered to congratulate him, "who dare say that I am going away? What do they know of my designs? I am not going. Surely I may order my people and my horses about me when I please." He left his council and his ministers, only saying, "I am going to review my troops." The *Moniteur*, which any one may consult, assigned no other motive than this for the Emperor's departure. These precautions, strained

to an excess, prove to a demonstration, that the origin of this war, the time and mode of its commencement belong exclusively to Napoleon.

Another observation is grounded upon the self-complacency which the Emperor enjoyed in deceiving Paris, relative to his future intentions, and the pleasure he took in *mystifying* his good citizens. I hope I shall be excused the use of this expression; the Emperor always dreaded Paris. The saloons of that city afforded him no pleasure; he was conscious he never reigned there.

Et que, de quelque nom qu'un esclave le nomme,
Le Fils de Jupiter passe la pour un homme.

This man, who received his education at a military coffee-house, and retained its manners and its language, must of course be an enemy to all kind of urbanity, and even the shadow of that liberty which is always observed in good company; and without which society cannot subsist. Napoleon has often read his condemnation in the faces of many of his subjects: long has he wished, though in vain, to shake off the yoke of public opinion: but not succeeding, he has been, and must still be, content to bear it, in spite of his reluctance. It has been his greatest pleasure to hold up the Parisians to ridicule: when speaking of them, he always uses the terms *des badauds, des caquets de la grand ville*. The lowest, the most insulting terms are continually in his mouth when speaking of Paris, and there can be little doubt that with respect to the tongues of Paris, he has entertained the same wishes as those of Caligula, relative to the heads of the people of Rome.

It was thus that he avenged himself of that hatred that he knew inspired all hearts, yet he was highly pleased in making these *badauds*, as he called them, the instruments of circulating such reports as suited his purposes, though ever so absurd, particularly as to his pretended auxiliaries.

The *mystification* to which he was so much attached, may afford some idea of his taste, and the sentiments he entertained of his own personal dignity, as well as the duties he owed to his people. He was the first sovereign who dared at the same time to outrage a nation, and treat them with contempt. I shall only add three more remarks ; first, the man who created a rank, a state and a manner equally new to France and all Europe, out of all acknowledged rank, either royal or imperial ; who has converted three or four kings into assistants about his throne, and assumed the right of ordering his feudatory monarchs to swell the pomp of his retinue ; the man who caused the train of his new spouse to be borne by five or six queens ; and who has ten times at least written in the *Moniteur*, that such a family has, or shall cease to reign ; who never signed a peace but in his enemy's capital ; who never waited for a declaration of war, but prepared and commenced hostilities to suit his own convenience, must be equally regardless either of honour or precedents.

It is evident, that the common course of life was absolutely intolerable to Napoleon ; he could exist only in storms. Men in general are satisfied with their habitual modes of existence, content with witnessing a few extraordinary events as the common lot of humanity ; but with Napoleon, agitation in

the extreme was the basis of his being; he was nursed in the lap of storms and commotions, as others are in the bosom of peace. In the midst of these he flourished and prospered, in proportion as others would have languished and died. We may surely be permitted to utter complaints to heaven for suffering a mortal, with such an antipathy to the repose of all others, as that of Napoleon, to exist so long: but so it has been, and as long as he may still survive, all his exertions, both physical and moral, will tend to the disturbance of others, and to his own torment. "You men of wit," said he, "are all fools; you women are all ——." "I am weary of inaction, I must have war," and he immediately set out for Prussia. This was said at court in 1806. These things speak volumes, and are sufficient to satisfy the world as to the cause of this man's restlessness.

Napoleon ascended his throne in a manner very different from other sovereigns; he appeared here like an actor upon a theatre. "I speak as an oracle; I perform prodigies; the wonders of this day shall be exceeded by those of to-morrow." Such was the inflated language held by him upon his first entrance upon the stage of royalty. Not satisfied with commanding, he wished to be admired; he wished to be first, and unique in his kind, and that his honours should increase with his power. He wished for the eyes of the universe to be continually fixed upon him; he alone wished to occupy the hundred tongued trumpet of fame; and only regretted his inability to add to their number. This has been the object of all his actions from the commencement of his reign.

Many of his journies have been merely contrived for the purpose of drawing the attention of the public. The deputations sent him from all parts of France and Europe on these occasions, were so many clouds of incense. This scene was never suffered to languish, and when diversification became necessary, it was often enlivened by some of those great calamities which men, by a contradiction in their nature and their interests, have agreed to celebrate, as the most worthy of their admiration, and to exalt the principal performers as men who have a right to their most profound respect. War alone is the only object that Napoleon loved and honoured, the only thing that he prosecuted with pleasure; and to the world's great misfortune the only one in which he escaped *ennui*.

In fine, can it possibly be supposed, that with a disposition which has been placed beyond the possibility of doubt, that Napoleon, whose haughty and malignant mind was invested with a power almost unlimited, did not compel Russia to take a part in the grand drama exhibited on the theatre of Europe, during fifteen years? Or that he did not mean to extend it all over the world?

Let us then conclude as certain, from the facts brought forward, and the Emperor's known system, that Bonaparte was undoubtedly the author of the war with Russia, as a part of his plan for the subjugation of Europe; in which an attack upon this empire was indispensibly necessary. If any scruples remain on this head, it cannot be for want of evidence, but merely from bestowing too much investigation upon a question sufficiently clear.

The Emperor quitted Paris the 9th of May. I followed him on the 10th with a part of the court. Upon reaching Metz the next day, the 11th, M. de Vaublanc paid us a visit, and informed us, that the Emperor had passed the evening with great gaiety, and that he had boasted that he was going to put all Poland on horseback. The Prefect expressing some astonishment, he added, "Yes, sixteen millions of Poles. I will produce them all in the field." He then gave full vent to his usual rhodomantades, and ran on about the success he had already experienced, and that which he still expected, with a degree of frenzy.

I reached Dresden the 17th of May, after one of those painful journies to which all the court of Napoleon were subject. Men, women, and children, of all ranks, were expected to travel like government couriers.

The Emperor took the route of Franconia to avoid Weimar, the residence of the sister of Alexander. Relays were provided across the mountains, at the expence of the Saxon government.

If you wish to form a just notion of the dominion which this man exercised in Europe, transport yourself in imagination to Dresden, and contemplate this proud Prince at this zenith of his glory, a zenith so near to the lowest point of degradation. The Emperor occupied the principal apartments of the castle. He had brought with him a numerous household. He kept his table there, and after the first Sunday, upon which the King of Saxony held a court gala, it was at the table of Napoleon that the sovereign princes assembled and lived. The grand mar-

shal sent the invitations. Some private individuals were occasionally invited ; myself, as an ambassador, had this honour.

The levées of the Emperor were held as usual. They were attended by these sovereign princes. It was really afflicting to see the humiliation of so many illustrious and independent German princes, all submitting themselves in the most lowly manner, and anxiously awaiting their fate, their reward, or their punishment, from this arbiter of nations. It was really distressing to hear the frivolous questions which Napoleon addressed to them, and their humble responses. Worthy a place in the annals of pride.

The Prince of Neufchatel (Berthier), had proposed to Count Metternich, the exchange of Galicia for Illyria. Berthier now informed Napoleon, that the Count had declined to enter on the subject. "What," exclaimed Napoleon, "does he hesitate where he knows my wish. A pleasant fellow this. Gentlemen, mark the weakness of the human mind ; *for it is the greatest of weaknesses to indulge the hope of being able to contend with me.*"

Nothing ever struck me as equal to these expressions ; they can never be erased from my remembrance. In comparison with a man, inflated with such a portion of self-love as this, Nebuchadnezzar, the proud, must be viewed as a perfect pattern of humility.

At my arrival at Dresden, the Emperor informed himself with much apparent interest, with respect to my health, and enquired of me how I had borne the journey. To my answer that I was never in better

health, "See," said he, "what falsehoods obtain currency; they had told the Empress that you were in extreme danger."

I was for some time ignorant to what cause to impute these tender enquiries, so little usual with Napoleon. I had, indeed, some suspicion, that I was to be the instrument of some of his views upon the Polish clergy.

A few days, however, fully explained it. On Sunday, the 24th or 25th of May, he summoned me into his presence after mass, and after having again made mention of my health, began to open his designs. But he still only spoke in abrupt hints, and it was only from the Duke of Bassano, that I learned the detail and purpose of my mission. Napoleon spoke only of sending me into Poland. "I will try your talents. You will reasonably suppose that I want you for some other purpose than saying mass. You must keep a good table, and have a suitable retinue. They are of weight in that country. You ought to know something of Poland. You have read Rhulieres. I shall beat the Russians. The candle is burning. By the end of September every thing must be finished. I am losing time here. I am acting the gallant,—like the Count Narbonne, with the Empress of Austria." I know not what particular pique he had taken against this Empress, but he now indulged himself in abusive terms, which I will not repeat. I reminded him that some of the partitioning powers of Poland had become his allies, and suggested the difficulty of reconciling their interests with his present views. He replied vaguely, but led me to infer, that after having

finished with Russia, he would assume the master towards Austria, and compel her to accept Illyria in exchange. He positively said, he did not know who he should bestow the kingdom of Poland upon, after its integrity was restored. As to Prussia and Silesia, their fate was decided. He spoke of the latter only with the most profound contempt.

— He informed me of the arrival of the Pope at Fontainebleau. He added, "I am going to Moscow; one or two battles will settle the business. The Emperor Alexander will be brought to his knees: I will burn Thoulà; behold Russia disarmed. They expect me at Moscow; it is the heart of the empire. I will carry on the war with Polish blood. I will leave 50,000 French in Poland; I will make Dantzic a second Gibraltar of the North; I will subsidize Poland with fifty millions a year; I am rich enough for that. The continental system is a folly without Russia. I should have been master of Europe, but for this Spanish war. My son, without any great talents, would then only have to keep what I had acquired. Go to Maret, he will inform you of the particulars of your mission."

This was his conversation, word for word, only important as far as it throws light upon his views. He softened much of it by some approbation of my conduct. These are eulogiums, which he very well knows how to apply, when his interests require it; but when his anger predominates, every one is with him a fool or a driveller.

He had no manner of doubt of complete success. This confidence he imparted to every one, strangers or natives, without distinction. All the French youth

of Paris, looked upon the expedition, as a grand hunting party, which would not occupy more than six months. The army too, thirsting after preferment and plunder, lent themselves to these measures, without restraint. Happy were those who were chosen to partake in this enterprize ; those who were refused, either blamed their unlucky stars, or censured the Emperor's judgment. I, however, anticipated some fatal events.

If a thunderbolt had fallen at my feet, it could not have excited more horror and astonishment than I felt when I first heard of my nomination as ambassador. I always had an aversion to the Polish expedition. I had employed much of my time, during the winter, in endeavouring to persuade the Duke of Rovigo, minister of the police, and who was in the habit of conversing with me, that though this attack should be made, as a *coup de main* upon Moscow, or by regular campaign in Poland, or in confining our operations to the shores of the Dwina, or the Borysthenes, still the most serious obstacles would present themselves.

From some unaccountable presentiment, I could not help regretting the fate of the unfortunate soldiers, whom I observed traversing Paris, on their way to the deserts that were to devour them. When I was invested with the office of grand almoner, by Cardinal Fesch, I also solicited him to divert the Emperor from his purpose. I made similar attempts upon the minister of public worship, to induce him to make representations to the Emperor, on account of the state of my health, and the inconveniences I should be exposed to in the midst of military move-

ments. This gentleman, with that urbanity and benevolence, which has actuated him in every relation with the members of his administration, endeavoured to allay my apprehensions; still I could not avoid feeling them in all their force, when I could no longer evade the honour intended me. The people of Dresden thought me extremely fortunate, when I was really in the deepest despair. My concern, however, was in some degree lessened, by the observations I made upon the mistaken judgment of men, who were congratulating me, probably with a mixture of envy, under the idea that I had at length arrived at a point of distinction, for which I had long sighed, whilst in fact, I was even a stranger to repose.

Some persons may possibly conceive this narrative has been written upon slight grounds. If they had heard the conversation of those who were attached to the embassy, or seen the memorial which I transmitted to the Duke of Bassano, when I solicited my recall, they would adopt very different sentiments.

Behold me, then, an ambassador, in spite of all my endeavours, and having for the maintenance of this high office, a footman, and twenty-five louis; this too was the result of the confidence with which I had been distinguished. Marshal Duroc lent me 6000 francs to defray the expences of my new office.

When according to the Emperor's order, I waited on M. Maret, I could only get a sight of him in the corridor of the chateau, there he notified to me my appointment, with a certain salary of 150,000 francs per annum. He desired me to attend him next day,

but then as well as for several days following, all my attempts to obtain an audience were fruitless.

This minister was incessantly going backwards and forwards from his house to the chateau, where he was besieged by those of the great and inferior powers. He had no idea of brevity in business. He remained three or four hours with each minister. His apartments were filled with poor dependants like myself, waiting for their deliverance, and the opening of the doors, that was once more to conduct them to the light which I was deprived of, at least four days, at the expiration of which I was fortunate enough to get a sight of this busy minister, buried in a heap of papers, without order or classification. My entrance into diplomacy, was by no means strewed with flowers. The duke in this interview seemed very eager to get rid of me; he however gave me my instructions; but he only spoke decidedly of the Poles, the mixed subjects of the Duchy of Warsaw, belonging to Austria and Prussia; he desired me to treat them purely as Poles, and made no exception, but in favour of those who had no connection with the Duchy of Warsaw. He gave me to understand that at present it was necessary to temporize with Austria and Prussia; but as this necessity would not be of long duration, other arrangements would then take place.

The Emperor was already upon his journey. They required me to follow him. They sent me an account of the actual force of the Russian army, drawn up from the materials of M. Bignon and other agents, between Petersburg and Constantinople. This hurry of the Duke of Bassano must be imputed —

to several causes ; first, to the immensity of the affairs in which he was actually engaged ; secondly, to the perpetual summonses for his personal attendance upon the Emperor ; and, thirdly, to the kind of life which his excellency lived. He turned day into night, and night into day ; he went to rest late ; and was equally late before he rose ; he remained an endless time at his dinner and supper, and lost much valuable time in gossiping with women. It was truly annoying to see him neglect the most important concerns to lose his time with some of these ladies ; every one had to wait whilst he bandied backwards and forwards the pleasantries of these females. I have never seen in this respect a more frivolous man.

I shall not take my leave of Dresden, without mentioning some of the observations which there suggested themselves.

To the Emperor's residence at Dresden, we may apply what was said by Phedrus, of Hippolytus ;

“ Meme au pieds des autels que je faisais fumer,
J'offrais tout a ce Dieu.”

Napoleon was the god of their idolatry. The only king that was present ; or rather the king of kings. It was upon him only that all eyes were turned ; and the royal house of Saxony were only his guests in their own capital. The throng of travellers of all kinds,—officers, courtiers, and couriers,—the crowd of the city,—the eagerness of the most distinguished nobility to view this idol of their admiration, was astonishing. All these circumstances composed a spectacle, which carried his greatness to the highest point.

The King of Prussia arrived at Dresden. Every one was anxious to see an interview between two sovereigns situated as Napoleon and this king. It is said that the King of Prussia returned from the palace with an air of pleasure ; and every one, French as well as German, were happy to believe it. The Empress of Austria, however, was the most attractive spectacle. Never shall I forget the impression which she made, when she appeared to us coming through a long avenue of apartments, preceded by the Emperor Francis, and followed by the count. So much beauty, so much grace, and so much true majesty ! Her Hungarian dress still improved her beauty, and gave her that *en bon point*, which was all she wanted. Every one murmured their approbation as she passed ; every one owned that she was truly an Empress. This charm of her appearance was further augmented by that of her conversation ; her wit was not inferior to her beauty, and her benevolence was worthy of both.

The Count of Narbonne, aide-de-camp to the Emperor, arrived at Wilna before I left it. He had been at Berlin, to allay the apprehensions of the Prussian cabinet. I knew enough of him to enquire the particulars of the embassy from which he returned. He appalled me, by informing us that the Emperor Alexander was in the best attitude of defence, that he was not abashed nor elated, but sober and determined ; that he had expressed his regrets for the rupture with the Emperor Napoleon, but had excused himself from being the cause of the war. That he had said, he was not ignorant either of the power or talents of the Emperor Napoleon, but that

if we would take the map of Russia in our hands, we should see that he did not want space ; and that he would retreat to the very bottom of Siberia, before he would sign a treaty of peace disgraceful to Russia.

I inferred from this answer, that our affairs were in a bad condition, and in the magnanimity of Alexander's sentiments, I seemed to recognize all the boding presentiments I had expressed to the minister of police, last winter.

I met a friend at Dresden, to whom I was much attached, the Count de Senft. This nobleman was greatly esteemed, both in France and in all foreign kingdoms, where his worth, wealth, and talents, were known. In one of our conversations at Dresden, "There are only three persons in all Saxony," said he, "who have any regard for the French,—myself, my wife, and the king. It is the same in Russia, and in all Germany."

I now commenced my journey. I will not endeavour to paint my feelings, when after having traversed the Elbe, I began to ascend the mountains, on the opposite side of the river, and came in view of those black forests, which extend from Dresden into the extreme North. Each tree appeared to me a cypress. It appeared to me that I had entered a new world. The scene was immense, and I remembered what was the object of my mission.

It seemed to be as if Europe ended with the passage of the Oder. Here began a new language, and new manners and habits. The great number of Jews, who wear an Asiatic costume, imprinted upon the country an air decidedly oriental. Poland is not indeed Asia ; but still less is it Europe. Its sun has

not the fervor of the torrid climes. Its agriculture is in its infancy. It was now the month of June; the season was delightful; the face of the soil a parched desert. The animals were all dwarf, and stunted; the people themselves of a good shape and size, but characterised by extreme poverty; wooden towns; houses filled with filth, and vermin, and the most revolting food. In a word, the nation seemed only in the first stage from the most savage barbarism. I reposed some hours at Wolburch, the country house of the Bishop of Cujavia, at the entrance of the town of Petiskaw. I found his secretary, one of the canons of the chapter, with his dress much torn, and in wales from blows given to him by General Vandamme, personally, because he refused to give the general some tokay. The bishop was highly indignant at this insult to his officer, who assured the haughty general, he really had no wine, because the King of Westphalia, who had lodged there the preceding evening, had loaded all his carriages with it when he went away.

Here the complaints against the depredations of the army and its agents became general and incessant. I remember meeting a Jew, coming from Warsaw, when asking him, What news? he very archly exclaimed in French, "News! why there is nothing to eat!" The bishop had to learn the character of General Vandamme, whose army was composed entirely of Germans, forming the Westphalian and Saxon corps. There were no French before the arrival of General Durutte, from Berlin, with his division, about 14,000 strong. We ought to do this corps the justice of acknowledging that it was a model

of regularity and discipline, and that no complaints were made against it.

I arrived at Warsaw on the morning of the 9th; an aide-de-camp of General Bigamki, the commandant, conducted me to my lodgings. Their condition would be a lesson to the ambitious. Never was any thing more horrible. For fifteen days the imperial ambassador of France was compelled to sleep on the floor, because there was no bed, and devoured by insects, and all kinds of vermin. My secretary and myself could with difficulty find a chair each. The King of Saxony had assigned me the hotel of Count Bruhl. But Jerome, King of Westphalia, had now occupied it. The Count Potocki then offered me the lower part of his hotel, which I gladly accepted. Now commenced all the labours of my commission. I had a perpetual levee from ten to three. I had to see every one and to answer every one. In a word, from the 20th of June to the 27th of December, the day of my arrival and of my departure, nothing could be more onerous than the burthen imposed upon me. I had to convoke the Diets; to draw up the proclamations; to prepare the business; to preside at council; and above all, to send a daily report to the cabinet of the Emperor Napoleon.

The weight of these difficulties was much increased by the King of Westphalia, the depredations of the army, and the poverty of Warsaw.

The King of Westphalia had come to Warsaw, to take the command of the army composed of Saxons, Westphalians, and Poles. This army formed the right of the grand army. General Vandamme commanded the Saxons.

The King of Westphalia (Jerome Buonaparte), found the time irksome, and therefore hourly sent for me. He resembled his brother more in his habits than in his talents. The same quickness of speech,—abruptness; the same adventuring spirit; the same contempt of morality; the same military brigandism. He aspired to the throne of Poland and ridiculed the similar hopes of the King of Saxony. He was moreover a great speaker, and spoke with a volubility little consistent with his dignity. His thoughts, however, were better than his words. But he exaggerated or diminished every thing according to his hopes and wishes, like his brother he walked without ceasing up and down the room; talked in exclamations, and expected every one to follow him.

He felt persuaded that the Russians would risk a battle, because he knew that Napoleon would beat them, and therefore he wished it. I was persuaded for the same reason that they would not risk a battle, but retreat into the extremities of their dominions, and lead us after them.

From my first arrival at Warsaw, I heard nothing but complaints of the horrible excesses of the Westphalians. They plundered and extorted from every one. Vandamme had already become an object of horror. Even Jerome was not spared. These circumstances very ill recommended our cause.

Let me now say a word as to the duchy of Warsaw. It comprehended ten departments and near five millions of inhabitants.

Its government was formed on the model of that of France; it was composed of a senate, a council

of state, and a council of ministers. The King, having his residence at Dresden, trusted the administration of the duchy to a council of ministers; the resolutions of this council were transmitted to Dresden, where they were accepted, rejected, or modified; a source of much tardiness in the administration. Count Potocki presided. This is one of the most illustrious names in Poland; and a truly noble house. His wife, the Princess Lubonirska, was worthy of her rank and husband. The minister of finances, Count Mathuchwicz, was a man of knowledge and talents, and the minister of war, Count Wielkowski, though old and infirm, reminded us of the zeal and activity of Florida Blanca.

The army of the duchy was composed of about 60,000 men, 40,000 infantry, and 20,000 cavalry. The support of such an army greatly exhausted the duchy, which, besides its natural poverty, was suffering under a scarcity approaching to a famine. Poland has no other revenue or rent than what she derives from the sale of her corn. Her ports in the north are Dantzic and in the Baltic; her ports in the south are the Niester, the Borysthenes, and Odessa. The Continental system had closed the first; the war with Turkey, the latter. Nothing, therefore, could exceed the poverty of the country at this period. There was no money because the corn had not been sold. And still there was no corn because it had become spoiled, the Polish corn not being of a nature to keep.

Under all these circumstances nothing could exceed the misery of all classes. The army was not paid—the officers were in rags—the best houses were

in ruins—the greatest lords were compelled to leave Warsaw from the want of money to provide their tables. No pleasures, no society, no invitations as in Paris and in London. I even saw Princesses quit Warsaw from the most extreme distress. The Princess Radziwil had brought two women from England and France, she wished to send them back, but had not the means to pay their journey. She detained them four months because she was unable to pay their salaries. I saw two French physicians in Warsaw who informed me that they could not procure their fees even from the greatest lords.

I could not sufficiently admire that confidence with which Napoleon precipitated his nation and his fortune into an immense enterprize, formed on the faith of a most powerful co-operation on the part of a nation so deeply sunk in debt. This naturally leads me to examine what it was that could inspire that confidence. I think more causes than one might be assigned:—

As 1st. The character of that Prince;

2dly. The Poles, the pamphleteers, and other politicians of the same stamp;

3dly. The Duke of Bassano.

We have seen above that the attack on Russia was the finishing stroke of the Emperor's system in the order in which the submission of Europe was to be accomplished. The project had been settled, nothing more was wanting but the means of carrying it into effect and the time when it would be proper to begin.

Into that project the extravagant character of this Prince fully entered in all its extent. His desires are ardent, his conceptions rapid; obstacles he re-

moves by the force of power and of illusions. The Emperor is all system—all illusion, as a man cannot fail to be who is all imagination. He *Ossianises* in the transactions of life, if I may use the expression. Any one who has observed the course which he has pursued, has seen him create an imaginary Spain, an imaginary Catholicism, an imaginary England, an imaginary system of finance, an imaginary nobility, and, above all—an imaginary France, and in these latter times, an imaginary Congress. He was demonstrating to me that the bishops of the council were on his side one hour before they entirely deserted him. He falls into error in the most logical method, and pursues his observations into infinity; at the same time that he starts infinitely wide of the point for which he set out, which is false. He attacked the Spanish nation, furnishing them with a character and notions of his own invention. He had no idea of the nature of Catholicism when he opened his controversy with the Pope and the Gallican Church. He argued with me that the religion of Voltaire was the religion of France, when at the same time there was not, from the lowest of the faithful to the highest Metropolitan of the country, one Frenchman who separated himself from the Pope, the more he had disappeared the more was he present to the eyes of all. In like manner, in his despair at seeing credit fly before him, he had for many years directed all his anathemas and the pens of all his hireling writers against public credit, hoping, by such means, to extinguish that of England; and did not perceive that he was only wasting his strength in efforts which could have no other effect than that of

preparing a weapon which would be turned against himself in the day of his necessity. To minds so disposed, allurements alone are wanting; every snare is good in their eyes.

We must not, therefore, be astonished at the inconsiderate precipitation with which Napoleon plunged into the Russian war. He has proceeded in that enterprize as in every other: he has calculated with respect to Russia as he has calculated with respect to Spain: in both cases he measured the resistance by the advantages which he expected to derive, and by the flattery which he suffered to approach him. The Emperor's conceptions are immediately attended with the most eager desires—his thought becomes a passion at its birth—his mind becomes intoxicated by his reveries: his principal employment is to remove the difficulties which may be opposed to those dear children of his brain. He is naturally a restive animal, which the truth sets prancing, and which is obstinately bent against taking the right road of reason. With him, affairs of the greatest moment assume the appearance of caprice. In speaking on the business of Poland he inadvertently said that it was a whim—(*C'était un caprice.*) I leave this truly monstrous expression to the reader's reflection.

The Emperor, besides, having taken it into his head that the art of reigning, aided by the assistance of councils, was foreign to every thing which comes within the range of his idolatry, was, of course, not accessible to any opinions but those which flatter his own: this is the greatest appeal which can be made to deceit; it is also the most perfidious abyss which

can be opened under the feet of him who delivers himself up to it. Those who are interested in it may in vain try to gain a man over to this object when he is so disposed. The fox in the fable had not a finer game to play than all those who laboured to draw him into this enterprize had with Napoleon. On one side were the Poles, who looking upon the duchy of Warsaw but as a step to the re-establishment of Poland, cultivated, with the greatest care all the seeds of this change which existed in the mind of the Emperor Napoleon. The honour of the Emperor—co-operation on their part—the completion of the system formed by the Emperor's care—contempt of the enemy—every thing was resorted to in order to fire and inflame the mind of a man who was already but too much turned towards adventures. There did not come one Pole to Paris but who helped to charge the mine. Some of them sojourned there, and with the same views never separated themselves from persons who possessed influence. Of the two hundred and four dispatches which make up the correspondence of my predecessor, more than one hundred are monuments of the hopes and *excitations* of the Poles. We must also add the crowd of pamphleteers—of authors hatched by the fostering heat of the *Moniteur*, evil and false spirits, who from all quarters of France, and of Europe, ran at the least signal, and placed their pernicious talents, their very limited information, and their vast desires at the disposal of Napoleon—a race as devoid of conscience as of true knowledge—blind, though always speaking of light—hurtful in their own nature—without love or hate—always scattering disorder every where, at the same

time that they were talking of organizing every thing; in a word, that cursed tribe of writers of the *Brisso-tine* school, and of that of *Barrere* and of the *Moni-teur*, whose occupation for twenty-five years that the world has had the misfortune to be in their hands, has been to confound all notions of right and wrong, to raise from the corruption of their hearts and understandings, vapours over all political and moral truths, and who, in their madness, either natural, or that which they acted for money, have reduced the world to a chaos of ruins and ashes, from which their talents or those of their equals will never be able to recover it. It is to the *inspirations* of such wretches that Napoleon liked to give himself up—any other representation was considered as unfortunate, or immediately rejected. When one aspires only to the formation of storms and tempests, he only wishes for the assistance of those who spread the winds.

You may well imagine that these gentlemen were not sparing of their assistance on this occasion—that not one of them failed to answer when called upon. You may here also see the nature of those writings which this epoch brought forth. How Russia was represented in them! What a pigmy did they make of her! How was the incredulity of those persons insulted who measured Russia on a larger scale! Read the *Moniteur* of the preceding years, and of the year 1812, and every thing is found there. I know very well how some men were scorned, who, more perfect in judgment and in conscience, repelled with horror those depreciating exaggerations. It was in vain for them to represent, to cry aloud,

to anticipate what was to happen hereafter; they were not so much as listened to; the spell had taken effect, and the infatuated hero was flying to his destruction on the wings of flattery, imagining at the same time that he was flying to the summit of honour on the wings of victory.

The Duke of Bassano had assumed to himself the patronage of the Poles, and was besieged with them; he paid them with hopes, for that incense of flattery which he received from them: every thing Polish charmed him. Infatuation is a principal trait in his feeble character. Every Pole was to him a *Molakouski*, a *Mokranouski*; he spoke of the Poles as of knights errant, the very flowers of chivalry; every representation disadvantageous to the Poles which was made to him, was odious to him—set him dancing mad; I myself experienced this. From the tender regard which he professed for Poland, one would have rather taken him for a descendant of the *Casimirs*, or *Jagellons*, than of an *Esculapius* of Dijon. This clientship of a nation was flattering to his self-love. It was easy to perceive what was the course of ideas which he was disposed to favour—the kind of writings which he cherished—the nature of the instructions which he authorised and confirmed. It was sufficient for him to see the mind of his Master directed towards that latitude, to cause him to expand all his sails in the same course, and to order all his winds to fill them.

But men will ask, who then is this Duke of Bassano, who, unfortunately for France, is found attached to every epoch of the revolution, from the short-hand writers box of the National Assembly, in

which he was born a politician, till he arrived at the highest honours of the ministry, and who embarrasses the world with the problem of what is the intrinsic value of an upstart journalist?

An ambitious mediocrity of talent—great self-complacency, even to the most minute details—the *sybaritism* of vanity—a Phylinthus with a heart of iron—a splendid miser of sensibility—a sublime genius in a *coterie*—pretensions to every kind of talent and to every species of knowledge—a disposition to ape his master—the refinement of servility, the morality and eloquence of the *Moniteur*.—Such did this Duke of Bassano, one of the scourges of the age, appear to me.

These charges are severe—I feel they are; they should not be made without proof; justice requires this. When we are about to dethrone a man from that fame to which he has been exalted—to deprive him of the treasure of his reputation, we should be armed with guns of every calibre to attack him in his citadel: but when a man's influence is found to be connected with the public calamities of his time, when his fortune and credit have been fed upon the disasters of the human race—when pride blinds a little puppet Atlas, on the point of engaging to charge himself with one part of the burden of the world, and when his vanity persuades him that he is sporting with this burden, which is still not so heavy as he is in his own person sacred—when he sports with the interests of so many men, can one be too severe? In such a case is it not our right, our duty, to invoke—to cause the awful, the impartial voice of those three sisters, justice, morality and history, which

should ever be inseparable, to resound like a clap of thunder, to make that mask fall off, behind which a juggler, scattering innumerable misfortunes with the most serene and assured countenance, has frequently succeeded in obtaining the homage of his very victims? These *Tartuffes* of sensibility have been too much spared—These interested ambitious men—these slaves of every favour, who, satisfied with clothing themselves with honourable appearances, see only, in the affairs of mankind, the drift of fortune or of pleasure—in their equals, but footstools, and in their masters, idols to whom they are to offer incense, and whose praise they are to extol. Let us give to every man that which belongs to him; and let this Duke of Bassano, who has so much sought flattery, in order to deceive himself and others, learn, at length, that he has not deceived all the world.

— The Duke of Bassano began his career in 1790, with reporting the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly for a newspaper. Read the now neglected Memoirs of Dumourier, and you will find him in the embassy of Chauvelin at London at the time of the death of Louis XVI. and on the eve of supplanting the ambassador, when the whole of the gang was driven from London. The Diplomacy of the Convention appeared to have nothing alarming, or capable of shaking the robust fibres which compose the tissue of his heart. He was entrusted by the Convention with that mission which the Austrians had disturbed at the entrance of the Valteline, by seizing him; Semonville, and I know not what other incendiary. Restored to France by exchange

for the daughter of Louis XVI. on the establishment of the Consulate, he succeeded M. Legarde as secretary to the Council of Government, and he held that post till he succeeded M. de Champagny as Minister for foreign affairs; that office had long been the object of his ambition. The labours of the cabinet, in their nature always obscure, presented to him too limited a horizon—a theatre too contracted for his talents. He would be the minister of France, or rather of Europe; for in the state in which things then were, the French minister for foreign affairs was nothing less.

The Duke of Bassano thought that dazzling appearances—a politeness too common to be flattering to any one to whom it might be addressed—too much of common-place to admit of being personally applied, constituted the essential part of his ministry, and covered all the faults of the minister.

His mode of discussing a subject is heavy, embarrassing, never precise nor luminous; his elocution wire-drawn. His principles those of convenience, force, and all that train of sophisms of which French diplomacy has been composed these twenty-five years past. The day spent in dissipation, the hour for labour at length arrives. The clock strikes twelve at night, business is recollected, and the minister shuts himself up in his cabinet. The clerks are called, and set to work. Woe to him whom sleep overpowers. About five in the morning the active minister goes to repose from his works of darkness, leaving to his wretched underlings the care of digesting the high conceptions with which he had entrusted them. Demosthenes said, that his labours

smelt of oil. Those of the Duke of Bassano, that I have received, have no better odour.

Flattery is the only sure road by which to arrive at the Duke of Bassano, with him every thing must be flattered, every thing admired, even to his Duchess's little dog. A witty gentleman has remarked, that this little dog had made a considerable number of Prefects and Auditeurs. He possesses a love of neatness which certainly participates of his personal self-love. It is charming to hear him recounting trifles—to hear him dwelling with great force on matters of the most trifling moment—to see him pulling roses. The Duke of Bassano is famous for his steady friendship; with him it is said to be a religion. Well, I have detected him in infidelity to his deity. About the end of the month of June, M. Andre, formerly well known as President of the Constituent Assembly, arrived at Warsaw. He had been sent for from Vienna, where he resided by the Duke of Bassano; he never knew why, or I either. The Duke desired him to stop near me, and to wait for further orders. M. Andre is perhaps the author of the Duke's fortune, by having caused a box to be fitted up for him and his journal in the body of the assembly.

He shewed me a letter from the Duke, as it served as his credentials with me. It was full of expressions of kindness and of eagerness to see him, which convinced me that he was an intimate friend of the Duke. I had known M. Andre only by seeing him in the Assembly, under another banner than that which I followed. I have since regretted my tardy knowledge of him; for I have found him,

in all respects, one of the worthiest men with whom I was ever acquainted. Some weeks passed without any news from the Duke; letters remained unanswered. I endeavoured to calm the patient, who was sometimes for proceeding to Wilna, at other times for returning to Vienna. At length a whole campaign passed away without a line being received from the Duke. He, however, came to Warsaw; dined with me in company with M. Andre without speaking a word to him, or answering his application for an audience. When, indignant at this neglect of all the duties of friendship, politeness and office, I pointed out to him the necessity of not removing without taking some notice of his old friend, he yielded, and spoke to him aside at the window, where he drily proposed to pay his travelling expences, which were rigorously calculated, with a man whom he had brought more than two hundred leagues, who had quitted every thing at his invitation, and whom he was now sending back in the severest season. Thus ended the drama of his tenderness for M. Andre. I think the theatre might work up this incident to advantage. All the bystanders remained in that sort of confusion which is made up of astonishment and indignation.

I shall readily admit as much sensibility in this Duke of Bassano as his friends can wish, and which they extol so highly; but let any one explain to me the nature of that sensibility which does not prevent a man from writing, in order to reproach me with having exhibited some sensibility at the burning of Moscow, which inculcated the truly hideous principle that my duty required me to make that event

a motive to enthusiasm—for a calamity greater than mankind has experienced since the burning of Troy!—who, when spoken to about thirty leagues of country laid waste and reduced to ashes, on the entry of the French army into Lithuania, (the devastation extended from the Niemen as far as Wilna, in the expectation that it would reach Moscow) answered, that “it had not reached its height”—who, whilst French and Russians, friends and enemies, were slaying each other, were perishing by myriads, by a thousand kinds of deaths, was most tranquilly enjoying the play at Wilna! for during the entire summer, his theatre was not shut up for one night—who, when the matter under consideration is an order of his master, or is what is termed a political combination, runs head foremost through all misfortunes towards an object oftentimes pointed out by a blockhead. To devour, to swallow up whole nations, is nothing in his eyes.—To be servile at any price, is every thing.

The only talent possessed by the Duke of Bassano was that of explaining the Emperor's ideas. It was curious to see with what an air he contemplated and listened to him. You would have sworn that he was worshipping him. I never saw a more perfect devotee. The repression of his own powers of thought and reflexion was carried to such a height, that he seemed to alienate his own mind in favour of that of the Emperor. He wrote to me on the 6th of July the following words:—“The discourse which you addressed to me seduced me, but the Emperor remarked to me that it was bad, and he is right.” As to his talents, we can judge of them not only from the *Moniteur*, of which he was supposed to be one of

the principal editors, but from the acts which have emanated from him during his ministry. Among other articles I would recommend to the reader's notice, the report on the declaration of war with Prussia in 1813. It will there be seen that because the Emperor was about to make war on Russia, it was necessary that Prussia should be effaced from the list of nations. A pretty sample this of the Duke of Bassano's logic.

It will be there seen that the finger of Providence is evidently imprinted on the events of that winter—of that winter which cost the lives of three hundred thousand Frenchmen, that the Emperor might see who were his friends and who were his enemies—a knowledge dearly purchased.

The Duke of Bassano has had the merit of perfecting that system of jugglery and deception by means of which the political quacks, who governed for so many years, have constantly endeavoured to pervert facts, to mutilate and twist them, in order to extract poison from them—a system formed in an age of liberty and of knowledge, to aid one man to push on thousands of his fellow-men to ruin and to death through the road of darkness and ignorance. "I reign by the means of Gazettes," said the Emperor. Those disastrous deceptions mounted to such an height, that at Wilna when the army flocked together to keep each other warm, to repair some of their immense losses, the Duke of Bassano was giving fetes, proclaiming victories, and by these means was lulling to sleep the *corps diplomatique*, to whom, in the following day, he allowed but six hours to prepare for their departure, who were tra-

velling when the glass was twenty-five degrees below the freezing point, which cost the American minister, Barlow, his life, who died eight days after of an inflammation of the lungs. The Duke boasted to me at Warsaw of this subtle political contrivance, as of a really masterly manœuvre. It was truly curious to hear the incessant imprecations of the corps diplomatique against the Duke, who treated him in no other light than a mountebank, and who loaded him with many other disgraceful epithets.

The Duke of Bassano made himself the Emperor's ape.

Because the Emperor was brought up in the profession of arms, the Duke of Bassano considered himself a general. The Emperor having charged him with the correspondence of that *corps d'Armee* which remained behind in Poland, whilst he himself was at Moscow, the Duke commenced lecturing the Generals, and directing their operations. I have heard gentlemen of the profession say that his audiences and his military notions were perfectly ridiculous; he had thrown every thing into confusion; that which he wrote to me on the subject of war was absurd.

As the Emperor always decided with brevity, the Duke of Bassano thought he should never express himself doubtingly on any subject. I shall give an example of this. In passing through Warsaw, he spoke to me on the subject of a remount which he had ordered in Moldavia. On my remarking, that, as the horses were brought from a great distance, and as they were unbroken, no use could be made of them before the month of May, he smartly replied, "Sir,

we lay hold of a horse, place a man on his back, and that is cavalry."

Because Napoleon has always attended to the supply of his own wants above those of others, the Duke of Bassano believed that every body should be ready to sacrifice his own to him. It was attempted to levy ten thousand horse in the Duchy—I say it was *attempted*, for that number of horses proper for cavalry was not to be found. I told him so. "But they are required besides (said he,) for the Emperor." "But the Duchy (said I) should have its own wants first supplied." "Furnish the Emperor first of all: the Duchy may then apply to the Russians—they sell every thing for money."

Public opinion accuses the Duke of Bassano with the most decided inclination for those proceedings, which infringe the security of other states.—He is reproached with having declared against peace at Dresden, when it would have left France in a highly flourishing state, even after the reverses of the Russian campaign. He is also reproached with having obstinately persisted in his warlike disposition after the battle of Leipsic, and during the negotiations at Chatillon. To crown these serious charges, he is believed to have acted a considerable part in the return of Napoleon, and he has shewed a marked zeal for maintaining at the head of affairs, a man who could not but be as fatal to the country as useful to this minister. During the short existence of the late usurpation, he was remarked for his warmth in favour of Napoleon I. and Napoleon II. as if one of them had not been enough.

It is now for the reader to judge, whether I have

not performed my task, and whether I have transgressed the bounds of justice and of moderation, in the charges which I have made against the Duke of Bassano—I will now resume my narrative; the foregoing is a long digression, but without it the rest would not be well understood.

“ When the events which were about to take place in Poland were on the point of commencing, the King of Saxony, at the desire of the Emperor, very much enlarged the powers of the council of ministers. It was in virtue of those powers that the council assembled the local diets for the nomination of deputies to the grand diet, which was about to meet. It was generally wished that Prince Czartorinsky should be nominated Nuncio of the city of Warsaw. The *batón* of marshal of the diet was intended for him, and for this purpose a place was vacated by the resignation of Count Lubinski, son of the minister of justice.

“ The important day at length arrived, and the diet was opened. The council directed all its movements.

“ It had been regulated that this act should be divided into two parts; in the first, a sitting consecrated to religious and civil ceremonies, as well as to the formation of a commission in order to draw up a report on the state of affairs, and the measures which they required, every thing was done as it had been agreed upon. The commission, to speak favourably of it, was provided with but one reporter, viz. Count Mathuchewitz, the minister of finance: assistants were given merely for form-sake. The character for talents which the count enjoyed, had

caused this employment to be conferred on him by the unanimous vote of the council. He, however, struck upon a rock.—As I am obliged to speak of myself it is necessary for me to enter somewhat into detail.

“ Many ministers had been at Posen, when the Emperor passed through that place, for the purpose of paying their respects to him, in the audience which he gave to them in that place, in which, in his usual manner, he advanced a thousand extravagancies; he spoke to them concerning the diet—of the mode in which it should be opened. Then touching, amongst other things, on the speech which it would be proper to deliver at the opening, he added, in that vague and vulgar language so familiar to him—‘ I do not lay you under any constraint: say what you please—make it fifty pages.’ The habit of servility had so far taken possession of all men’s minds—had so far banished all reflection, and terrified them with the consequences to be apprehended from deviating in the smallest degree from what might be considered as an order, even in things the most indifferent, that poor Count Mathuchewitz would have thought he was committing the crime of treason against his supreme lord, and would irrecoverably have destroyed all chance of the restoration of Poland, had he been so rash as to write forty-nine or fifty-one pages instead of the fifty which had been prescribed to him by the Emperor. Such an attempt could not meet with a less punishment. Consequently he had written fifty heavy pages, which, in order to shew still greater respect, were as long as the folios of a solicitor.

“ Such prolixity very rarely accords with eloquence, and I cannot conceive by what means, or upon what subject, a man can flatter himself with being able to excite and to fix the attention of his audience for such a long time—that faculty which is so much disposed to be fatigued—that spring which incessantly tends to lose its elasticity. The count shewed us the inconveniences of this prolixity in their entire extent. Astonishment took possession of one part of the council, and sleep of another, during the time of his reading that composition. He had done his best; in parts he had succeeded well; but the whole was far from being good. Remarks and corrections were proposed. The work resisted all correction. Fatigued at length with unavailing attempts, foreseeing the consequences of an unhappy *debut*, I ventured to make an offer of my inclinations and efforts to the council, to be employed in any way they pleased. It may be very easily supposed that a proposition of this nature is not without thorns: I felt it to be so. It might appear to be presumptuous, and perhaps offensive to substitute one’s-self in the room of the man of the highest character in the assembly. The satisfaction which self-love might feel touched so closely on the humiliation of the self-love of many others. To fail or give up is to be instrumental to one’s own discredit. But it was impossible to make use of the count’s speech—if we made use of it we must have resolved before hand to bear the laugh of all Europe raised against us. Already had two former acts, which had proceeded from the same source, appeared, without exciting any remark. The king of

Westphalia, after reading them, said to me, ' Mr. Ambassador, it is impossible to make any thing of this; take the business into your own hands.' Pressed therefore between a choice of difficulties, I decided on taking the most honourable part, which in business is always the surest. I expressed so strong a desire to see Poland re-appear in the most honourable manner before the eyes of Europe, which were fixed on her—I took so much care to keep myself in the back ground, that my proposition was most cordially received: I did not even remark, and I am happy to say so, that kind of curiosity and malignity which is uniformly attached to propositions of that nature. The next day I carried my discourse to the council.

" I find it difficult to express the sensation which it produced there. A second reading was called for. I never witnessed such surprize—such attention: the expressions of gratitude were unbounded, and the orator who had been supplanted, joined his to the general congratulations with a degree of zeal and warmth still more flattering to him who addressed them, than to him to whom they were addressed. A long time after this he even added, ' You are the cause of compliments being paid me, which embarrass me, and which I have scarcely deserved.'

" The report of the committee was read in the sitting of the diet on the 26th of June. What a day was that! What joy! What eagerness! Who can paint them in an adequate manner?

" I saw Count Mathuchewitz advancing, holding his speech in his hand. All eyes were fixed on him.

He speaks. The crowd, till then extremely agitated, hears him with such silence, that not a voice but his was to be heard. The name of Poland is at length pronounced, immediately there followed a universal clap of hands, every voice was raised in reiterated shouts of applause—they are continued outside the hall—the courts of the palace, the adjacent streets, ring with the same shouts—the enthusiasm was general—I never saw any thing to equal it. When the orator addressed himself to Prince Czartorinski, grand marshal of the diet, in compliment to whom an apostrophe was introduced, which called to mind his past services, the same transports, succeeded by the same great agitations of feeling, were renewed: this day must have been the proudest of his long and honourable career. In a word, nothing could be added to make the effect more complete; and that day, as well as the following, presented in all Warsaw the most lively and most impressive image of happiness. By degrees a calm succeeded, and after a few days nothing of this kind was to be seen.

“ I, from that time, began to perceive, that in proportion as we were marching onwards, a wind was blowing behind us, which was effacing the traces of our footsteps as soon as we impressed them in this moving sand: I shall presently explain the nature of that wind.

“ When the diet was opening at Warsaw, the campaign was also opening on the Niemen: that river was crossed on the 22d of June. The army reached Wilna the 24th June. The Emperor entered it on the 26th of that month. The military movements had been proceeded by a proclamation

which has become very famous. This proclamation arrived at Warsaw at the first day of the opening of the diet. The superstitious looked upon this coincidence as a continuance of the influence of the famous star of Napoleon, that star which has since turned so pale. It would be curious to read, at the present day, these proclamations, written in the style of one inspired, in which a kind of *Mahomet* pronounced himself every thing, and allowed himself every thing. It may serve as the sequel to another prediction crowned with a degree of success entirely similar;—that in which the Emperor announced to his legislative body, that the war of the Peninsula would end in a clap of thunder.

“ We may remark, that in the discourse delivered at the opening of the diet, the words, ‘ the kingdom of Poland,’ and ‘ the body of the Polish nation,’ were distinctly pronounced. This precise specification resulted from a formal injunction contained in my instructions. The meaning was clear; and expressed that the intention was to re-establish the kingdom of Poland in all its integrity. The diet separated after it had sat some days: it had acted its part, and was not to meet again till the end of the drama, for the purpose of closing all by the establishment of a new order.

“ This, agreeably to ancient forms, was a diet of confederation. There was left behind, at the time of its prorogation, a council of confederation, composed of twelve members. The difficulty which was found to complete this number with men possessed of some qualifications for business, gives us but a middling idea of the resources of this country, as

to the proper instruments of an administration. In reality it was not very far advanced; this council itself was never very strong. The members met every day, received addresses, petitions, and oaths relative to the confederation. They were disposed to go greater lengths, but were stopped by an obstacle of which I shall speak.

“ The king had joined the confederation; it was thought that his accession would add force to the federal link; for my part I never saw very clearly what good purpose it answered.

“ We now perceive with what instruments and with what support I had to work, and to make my way.

“ The campaign had been opened without making any provision for it: that was the method of Napoleon. Some of his foolish admirers think that it was to such policy he owed his successes. Now we know, with far greater certainty, that it is to this he owes his reverses. Above all it was provender for his horses which failed him. Four hundred thousand men, and one hundred thousand horses were suddenly thrown on Lithuania. The fires are kindled forthwith; one line of conflagration and destruction marked the rout of the army from the Niemen to Wilna. The kingdom of Prussia, though on friendly terms with us, was also very badly treated.

“ It was on this occasion that the gentle Duke of Bassano said, that in truth the evil was great, but that it had not as yet penetrated deep; which was false, for the troops advancing with the same disorder in all directions, in a short time every thing

was destroyed, and the excuse of its not having penetrated very deeply reduced to a cold but atrocious absurdity, as every subtlety used in the support of cruelty generally is.

“ The corn had been cut down to supply the want of forage, and the horses sent to feed on green fodder. They were not, however, suffered to make less speed on that account: a dreadful storm overtook them, and, lo! ten thousand of those wretched animals fell dead, whose carcasses poisoned the air for six months, on the rout from Kowno to Wilna, from which road they were the cause of turning away travellers. During this time, the king of Westphalia and his army were at a distance from Warsaw, and were marching against Prince Bagration.

“ I felt very sensibly the unpleasantness of my situation, and the few resources which I found at Warsaw. I endeavoured to inspire a little more valour into the government, and communicated the cause of my chagrin to the duke, as well as of my apprehensions and my ideas. But as they happened not to square with those which had pleased him to forge on the subject of Poland, for which his infatuation was extreme, he signified some displeasure to me, and ended with prescribing to me to keep myself free from politics, and to confine myself to providing for the wants of the army. It was surely the first time that an ambassador was excluded from taking any share in politics. Behold me, then, from ambassador become a war commissary! I reproached the duke with this conduct on passing through Warsaw; he did not contradict

what I said. But here we have an instance of how things are managed in France—a man is taken for one employment, and straightway he is put into another—he is forced to exchange the highest for the lowest.—Thus we have seen, in 1806, a great personage charged at Warsaw with the superintendence of the corn.

“ In the mean time I received a dispatch which completed my despair, and which tore aside the curtain which covered our present and future evils. I shall explain myself—

“ The Duke of Bassano had, on receiving my speech at the opening of the diet, lavished on me the most flattering encomiums. According to his judgment it was the choicest morsel which the age had produced. Of course I considered my poor speech as quite safe; but what must I think when, in opening the duke's dispatch, under date of the 16th of July, I read these words:

“ ‘ Your discourse had seduced me; but the Emperor has found it to be bad, and I am obliged to acknowledge that he is right. *His Majesty is of opinion that an address, drawn up at Posen by an old Pole, written in a bad style, but a style evidently Polish would have been better. What I write is agreeably to his Majesty's order, and I had almost said from his dictation.*’ Four pages follow, the publications of which, at the present time, now that our passions are cool, would cover their author with shame.

“ I confess that I was thunder-struck on reading this strange letter, and the impression I received from it was so strong, that since that time I never

laid my hands on the seals which closed the precious dispatches of the duke without fear and trembling. They were hateful to me, and when one day passed over without any arrival from the duke, I was enchanted. This would have been altogether inexplicable without some observations. The Emperor is all trick, but his cunning is backed by force. Men think differently, and are under an error. To triumph is to him nothing, to deceive is to him every thing. He attaches much more value to his cunning than he does to his power. This comes from his self-love, which makes him think that his cunning is more in his own personal quality than his power.— ‘ I am cunning,’ he has said to me above a hundred times in his discussions with the court of Rome:— ‘ They are Italians, and so am I.’

This pretension to superior penetration misled him so far at the battle of Waterloo, that insisting that the Prussian corps was that of Marshal Grouchy, he complimented himself by saying, “I am an old Fox.”

“ All his plans are calculated on the idea of a labyrinth: his play and amusement is to lead his adversaries from the point; to hold the thread and the secret in his own hand. It was upon a model of this sort that he arranged the business of Poland.— We have seen that he has set all his instruments to work in order to deceive Russia; that he endeavoured in like manner to deceive Austria—Prussia—the King of Saxony—and that at the very time he was making use of their services; they were not to be informed of the use to which these services were to be applied, but by the unravelling of the plot; he aimed at crowning this fabric of falsehoods with de-

ceiving all Europe taken together; and how was he to do this? He wished to be able to persuade people that he had nothing whatever to do with the movements of Poland, and that every thing proceeded from herself; that he confined himself to accept her co-operation in searching after a reparation of the wrongs which she imputed to Russia.

“ Thus did this truly inconceivable man aim at *mystifying* the whole world (pardon the expression), by endeavouring to persuade men, that when he was marching against Russia at the head of four hundred thousand men, of which a part were Poles —when his ambassador was setting in the council of Warsaw he aimed, (I repeat it) at persuading the world that he and his ambassadors were but spectators to all that was passing in Poland. Is not this, in truth, too much to expect of human credulity?

“ The Emperor halted at Wilna from the 28th of June till the 14th of July; he then marched upon Witepsk, from which place he proceeded to Smolensk. These pauses were necessary for the purpose of re-establishing order in his army, which was in a state of the most complete disorganization; it had arrived to such an height, that one of his aides-de-camp, a truly military man, was of opinion that they were marching on towards a catastrophe.

“ The Emperor, when he entered Wilna, established a provisional government, distinct from that of the duchy of Warsaw. The duke had taken care to include in the number of members, the name of one of his friends, Prince Alexander Sapiéha, whose appointment was very disagreeable to the Poles. I judge not of their motives, but only state

the fact. I have often heard them reproach this appointment as a great fault. Another fault which equally affected the Poles in a great degree, was the separation of Lithuania from the duchy.—Perhaps they were wrong; in the state of the duchy, which had become the property of the King of Saxony, perhaps they should have seen that this separation was but of a temporary nature, and was destined to be lost in the union of all the parts of Poland in one body politic. I have often represented it to them in this light; but could never succeed so far as to cure their discontents and their jealousies.

“ It had been agreed upon that a deputation of the confederation should wait on the Emperor at Wilna. The speech which Count Stanislaus Potocki had prepared was judged insufficient. I replaced it with another. The same judgment as that passed on my speech addressed to the diet, was passed also by the Emperor on this. He caused it to be replaced by a speech of a harsh and coarse fabric, in the course of which, the Emperor was addressed in these words: ‘ Speak, and sixteen millions of Poles are ready to rise up! Mark those words, sixteen millions of Poles!’ The rest was of a similar consistency.

“ The confused, evasive answer of Napoleon spoiled every thing: it dismayed the Poles. These good people, no more subtle than myself, entertained no doubts as to Napoleon’s cunning, nor as to the labyrinth which he had pictured to himself. They had set out all fire, but returned all ice. Their coldness communicated itself to all Poland, and

after that time we were never able to bring it back to a state of warmth. The duke wrote wonderful things to me about the great depth of this answer. He enjoined my secrecy respecting the change made in the speech, which gave me very little uneasiness. The King of Westphalia, on his return to Warsaw, was in extacies from the wonderful abilities which this speech displayed, and discovered that the Emperor had surpassed himself, by descending in this way by prudence to refinement, which was so directly opposite to the natural ardour of his genius. As for me, I remained in my state of incredulity, and persisted in thinking, as did all Poland, that this mark of genius was indeed nothing more than a remarkable trait of awkwardness, and would produce an effect directly contrary to that which was expected to be produced; which happened accordingly. We experienced, at Warsaw, that which is felt in every business—the effect of what had been done before, as well as of the conduct, good or bad, of the agents which are employed.

“The public almost always confine their views to appearances, and judge of the march and issue of affairs from some observations, or from some general principles, whilst hidden springs weaken and often destroy the game which is played openly. This is what happened to us at Warsaw, and from this may be explained that kind of torpor in which the nation remained in the midst of patriotic bursts of enthusiasm and civic shouts, which resounded from all parts. Behold the reason why all Poland was not mounted on horseback, as Napoleon announced he was about to do, to his prefect of Metz.

" We have already seen that public and private wretchedness were at their height in the Duchy; that this country maintained an army far above its means; that the imposts were enormous, though far inferior to the wants of the government; that the army, for a long time past, had been in want of every thing, though every thing had been given to it, and though it had swallowed up every thing; that the functionaries had not been paid their salaries; that for six years back the continental system had destroyed all commerce—had dried up every source of wealth, and that, to crown the misfortune, clouds of soldiers, inebriated by riot, and famishing from want, had pounced upon the little which remained from the inclemency of the season. All this was by no means adapted to rekindle the zeal of the nation. The Grandees, some part of the Noblesse, and of the professions termed liberal, put themselves in motion, and made sacrifices, in expectation of the Revolution; this is what always happens; but the mass of the nation was unconcerned in this impulse. Doubless the nation would have seen the re-establishment of Poland with great pleasure, if it could be brought about as with the turning of the wand of a Fairy; but if they must pay for the change with all their fortune, which had escaped six long years of efforts and privations, most certainly they would not wish to have it at that price. Let us leave it to those busy, pragmatical fellows who live upon the misfortunes and troubles of their country, to say that every thing should be sacrificed to the mode of political existence: nothing is more false than this doctrine. The primary con-

cern of all, and that to which every thing has a relation, is *existence*; the *mode* is a secondary consideration. Thus it appears, that when the Emperor, on his passing through Warsaw, undertook to prove to me that as the Duchy had given him thirty thousand men in 1806, it should supply him with one hundred thousand in 1812, he committed a great error, by comparing two periods together entirely dissimilar, and shewed me, without perceiving it himself, that the art of comparing dates was utterly unknown to him. He equally forgot both the efforts and privations of the Poles during six years, and falsely concluded, because they had done so much they could still do it; while sound logic required that the conclusion should be on the contrary; that inasmuch as they had done so much, they were not now able to make additional exertions.

“ I found the Poles drained—exhausted—supporting with the most feverish impatience the yoke of the Continental system—that plague, like those winds which the torrid zone sometimes vomits forth, has dried up every thing which the baleful breath of its author could reach.

“ From a contrary disposition, in some respects, but which most certainly has existed, the Poles regarded great efforts on their part as entirely superfluous; the opinion of the Emperor’s power was so strongly established among them, that they were firmly convinced that it was sufficient for him to say with respect to Poland, as the Divinity had with respect to light, let there be a kingdom of Poland, and that a kingdom of Poland would be.

Proofs of such unbounded confidence filled the dispatches of my predecessor at Warsaw. There never was but one thing doubtful on this point among the Poles, namely, whether the war would be declared on the part of Russia or on the part of France—in other respects they looked upon the result as certain as it would be infallible in its effects. After having furnished a body of troops amounting to more than eighty thousand men, and provisions for more than four hundred thousand, they thought, and justly, that they had supplied their contingent. The Poles wished much to arrive at the restoration of their country, but they did not wish to travel to it by the road of devastation and absolute ruin. Every thing has its price. The only thing to be done was to fix that price. But besides, how can any one imagine that a mighty mass of men would proceed to strip themselves gladly of every thing which they possessed, for the purpose of procuring a change in a government under which they were prospering; for nothing can be farther from the truth than what has been propagated and believed respecting the state of Poland under the Russian and Prussian government. To listen to the politics of the government of Paris, the Poles must have been taken for *Helots*; when the fact was, that their condition was infinitely ameliorated under the hands of these two governments, and when they had found amends in security, and riches for what they had lost in nationality. I can bear witness that I never heard any thing else than benedictions bestowed on the Prussian government, and that I never heard any complaint made against the Russian govern-

ment, by the Lithuanians and Volhinians, except that of their being no longer Poles, for in every other respect they praised it very much.

“ Consequently, when the Poles happened to find in their pretended liberators the devastators of unfortunate Spain, they recoiled with horror from the sight of a good, which was sold to them at a price so very dear, and prayed heaven to return it upon their enemies.

“ Let us consign to history the care of retracing this sad picture: others will be found in sufficient numbers who shall take charge of it—too many monuments will bear witness to it. For us, as Frenchmen, let us turn our eyes aside from it, while we regret, at the same time, that we cannot turn aside the eyes of the whole world. The only thing which I dare allow myself to say is, that, during seven months that I sat in the council of Warsaw, very few days passed over without the most afflicting reports being made to scatter consternation amongst us. I recollect that the minister of the finances told me, one day, of two of his near relations having escaped from the devastation of their estates in Lithuania, and of conduct worse than the massacre of their families, who, robbed and left naked on the trunk of a tree before their habitation, which had been reduced to ashes, were become thus exposed to the blows of soldiers intoxicated from a riotous course of life and the use of spirituous liquors; and that to close all, that the shock which their reason had received from so many acts of violence, had reduced them to such a state as to prevent their appearing to any one.

“ Another day we had an account of the burning of children—what shall I say? It is better to stop here—it would be better not to have commenced. All these horrors arose out of a system as absurd as it was inhuman, of making war without establishing magazines. A sort of system has been created which has become the scourge of armies as well as of nations—which has destroyed the art of war, and which has placed all those who follow this profession, formerly so noble, among the number of ferocious animals of prey. He who has thus depraved the hearts of generous warriors—who by such means has increased the calamities inseparable from a state of war a hundred fold, has merited the maledictions of the human race. Such then, are the sufferings to which the wretched Poles were reduced during seven months. My heart bleeds when I recal to mind all those horrors; and why must it not bleed when I think of what the Countess Alexander Potocki, the daughter-in-law of Count Stanislaus Potocki, a lady of great understanding, and the mother of many children, said to me one day; ‘ Of a revenue of six hundred thousand livres which I possess in Lithuania, there remain to me, at the present moment, nothing but the heavens above and the earth beneath; all the rest is gone for twenty years to come; I have nothing to expect from my former fortune. Let me stop here, and enquire what could have inspired into French soldiers such a spirit of rapacity, unknown to their predecessors that thirst of plunder—such a contempt for all the laws of society which cause a man, from the day he puts on a military uniform, to abjure all the sen-

iments of humanity and justice of which he was so full but a moment before—which makes the choice somewhat embarrassing between him who calls himself our defender, and him who calls himself our enemy? The answer is—want—example—impunity of those horrible manners produced by the Revolution, and brought to their *perfection* by Napoleon's method of war.'

“ From the moment that thousands have to struggle with want—that they are pushed forward upon a country which is pointed out to them as their storehouse, and find themselves in a condition to have recourse to force, they on all occasions appeal to force—they become ferocious brigands, because, as soldiers, they have been neglected both as to necessities and discipline: now let us take a survey of that mass of evils and of corruption which must follow from the application of this conduct to a mass of soldiers. It is evident, that it is from those who have created the necessity of the disorder, that we are to exact an account of the excesses which it carries in its train. This method is as foolish as it is barbarous. Besause it has succeeded in Lombardy and in the rich country of Austria, it is carried into Russia, to Poland, to Dresden—it is applied to four hundred thousand as well as to fifty thousand men—it is kept up in that country which is their own; we ruin those to whom we owe protection: what has happened from this? Two superb armies perish—the third expires from want in the midst of the most fertile provinces of France. By the downfall of these armies the glory and power of the country—its existence even hangs by a thread; and

whilst aspiring to the homage of the universe, we receive over heaps of corpses and of ruins, the most frightful punishment of the most horrible corruption of the understanding and of the heart that ever existed.

“ This neglect of proper management, has cost the French army, of Russia and of Dresden three times the number of men more than the battles which they fought. From the very commencement of the campaign the entire army was attacked with a dysentery. They were in want of bread; and the soldiers, thinking that they could make up for the deficiency by animal food, perished in thousands. No store of rice had been provided, and it was only at the end of the campaign that some was got by the way of Trieste. The corps of Bavarians, which at the opening of the campaign was twenty-five thousand strong, all of them fine tall fellows, was reduced by the end of October to two thousand men under arms: the remainder had perished, or were then incumbering the most miserable hospitals that ever existed.

“ God forbid that I should endeavour to injure any one; to take from any one whoever he may be, the treasure of his reputation, the most precious of all treasures! I am not writing a defamatory libel, I am an historian, and an historian of the most frightful catastrophes that the sun ever shone upon. History, posterity, are already seated on their tribunals, and are waiting for the victims which it belongs to Justice to summon before them. They have enjoyed the advantage of their actions and of their exploits; they were in hopes to escape in the

multitude of the guilty, and to enjoy impunity under the shade of a convenient obscurity. Justice, which never halts, will not permit them to enjoy that protection for ever; she wills that the punishment should be divided between them, and those who have been so blind or so depraved as to employ such instruments, to prostitute the honour of the nation of which they made them the representatives, and the interest of those who were connected with them; with men, unworthy in every respect, of those functions which become honourable from the very consideration that they are interesting to entire nations.

“ Now, let me ask, what agents did we make use of in Poland? What kind of men did we exhibit to that country?

“ Marshal Davoust had filled Poland with horror. I have heard of detestable scenes in which he acted, which excited strong prejudices against him and the French. It is to be regretted that a man who had been honoured with the highest military dignities, recommended by a degree of disinterestedness which does not leave the slightest stain on his fortune, would have habitually assumed the most hideous forms, and have descended, too often, to a language unworthy that rank to which he was raised. It is unfortunately, but too true, that every thing which Marshal Davoust has attempted against the King, and, above all, against the Queen of Prussia, enters, in more than the proportion of a full half, into that hatred which the Russians entertain against France, and those evils which they have inflicted on it.

“ M. Bignon was my predecessor at Warsaw. The duke spoke of him to me at Dresden as of a miracle. What was my astonishment when, instead of that gravity, that decorum and regard for the national honour, of that attention to maintain a spirit of mutual benevolence between the two nations (which, in my opinion, should have composed the whole manner of life and occupation of a minister of France), I found in him a little gentleman only taken up with writing little verses, with little women, little chit-chat, and who in the little puns in which he composed his little dispatches, said to the duke, in a familiar style, when speaking of the certainty of a rupture between Russia and France, that “ Russia will prime so often, present against France so often, that France would be forced to fire.” (Brunet could not have expressed it more happily.) Who, in speaking of the liberty which the King of Saxony was so kind as to permit in the society which he admitted near his person, remarked, that there reigned there the most noisy ease (*un sans-gêne bruyant.*)

“ All his correspondence is in the same tone, and presents a most fatiguing hotch-potch of business, executed with such pretensions to genius as belong to a wit of the lowest order. It is a collection of the lowest adulation of the Emperor, and of the most odious imputations against the Russians, of the most erroneous returns of the Russian force. The confidence, the boasting, the incitements which form the greatest part of that correspondence, do not admit a doubt but that M. Bignon should be considered as one of the fomenters of the Russian war. This correspondence appears clearly to have been drawn up with a view to that result.

“ M. Bignon had, by long continued manœuvres, obliged the chief of Prince Poniatowski's staff to divorce his wife; this caused a horrible scandal—the circumstances attending it were dreadful. When I arrived, M. Bignon was appointed commissioner to attend on the central administration of Lithuania. He sent for the woman to that place; she did the honours of his house, and of that of the duke.

“ At his departure I thought it my duty to give the duke all the details of the business, abstaining, at the same time, most rigorously from every kind of remark. The duke was not obliged to me for it, and continued to honour the ravisher and his prey, and to enable this unworthy representative of the nation to enjoy the enormous salary of eighty thousand francs till the very time of the catastrophe at Dresden, in which M. Bignon was made prisoner. The lady abandoned to her wretched fate remained behind in Poland.

“ General Dutallis was military commandant at Warsaw. That officer, who was attached to the staff of the prince of Neufchatel, and much employed by him, distinguished himself by frantic acts or absurdities, expressed in disgusting language. Having to provide for the wants of the army in a friendly country, he never spoke but of the most brutal violences; he was the very plague of the council, and always at variance with the Polish minister of war. One day he wrote that he would have the mattresses taken away from the beds of the inhabitants of Warsaw; the next that he would have the cattle driven off, which pastured under the city walls; at another time he caused, by his own private authority, a quantity of unsold forage, equal to five thousand rations,

to be burned, and that too in the house of the owner, under the pretext of preventing a supply of bad provisions to the troops. He was corrupted, by his authority, to such a degree, that he threatened the Baron de Baum, the Austrian commissary at Warsaw, with placing a centinel at his door, to keep him in his house. I found him one day quite vexed because he had not caused an Austrian officer, sent as a courier, to be arrested, who, as he was passing through Warsaw, had spoken of some advantages obtained by the Russians.

“ I have already spoken of General Vandamme. What can be added to that name?

“ A general who was quartered in the country-house of the Countess Potocki, was in the habit of having his meat sent home from the shambles in that lady's finest chariot. When he was told that her very curious articles of furniture would suffer greatly from the practice which he followed, of rolling his person upon them, when booted and spurred, he answered, with that insolent grossness which arises from the union of a bad education and power, joined in one—the very worst of all alliances.

“ I have seen in the hands of the very same Countess Potocki, the letters of a commissary at war, which were downright insolent. He stopped six weeks at her house on account of an illness, of which he afterwards died. He was not ashamed to write to her from the chamber which he occupied in her house—‘ Send me quilts of the finest and softest kind, and other articles of the best quality.’

“ The commissary-general at Warsaw was a man of the harshest and most troublesome nature that I

ever met with. I was under the necessity of imposing silence on him in a dispute which he entered into with the minister at war, at my house, in which he had forgot himself in the strongest manner. We passed seven months without hearing any other subject but of his turpitudes, which, in the position in which we were placed, were all in opposition to our interests, because they tended to cool the sentiments of the people, which the interests of the cause in which we were engaged required to be kept warm.

“ When I arrived in Poland, I laid it down as a fixed rule to be on my guard against speculators, projects and magnificent promises; such gentlemen are ever ready to dispose of that which is not theirs to dispose of, to make promises which they have it not in their power to keep, and build their importance on that credulity which by every means in their power they endeavour to inspire.

“ I had politely got rid of some of those promisers. The Duke of Bassano had been not so prudent in this respect. I knew three of his favourites in Poland; his choice fell on the three worst subjects in all the country; discretion alone prevents me from naming them.

“ One day I saw a little man arrive at Wilna, decorated as many of the Poles are. He presented me with his credentials, from the duke. They signified that this gentleman had given his majesty proofs of great zeal and ability. The letter is dated the 20th of July. I was recommended to support the operations of this man with all the means in my power. The council of ministers, the council of confederation, were put in requisition to assist him; his was

a formal mission; he was the Emperor's commissioner in Volhinia; every thing was to obey him; couriers were attached to his legation. I was to recommend this gentleman to our ambassador at Vienna. All this, as we see, had a most imposing air. Great reports were spread abroad on his appearance in Warsaw. What was his business? The most ridiculous character in all Poland; a kind of adventurer without any fortune, of the meanest aspect, deficient even in that species of talent which belongs in general to men of that stamp; such was Monsieur the Count Morski. I have never heard scandal equal to that which was propagated through Warsaw on the occasion of this man's promotion; in an instant I received a thousand representations on the subject. At a grand dinner to which I invited him, a few days after his *joyeuse entrée* into Warsaw, I distinctly heard voices in my hall calling him *punchinelle*. His plans were communicated to me; and I could not conceive how it happened that the first ten lines had not caused the duke's door to be shut in his face. The poor devil was not able to support any kind of discussion. The most distinguished officers resigned their commissions that they might not be obliged to serve with him. This man was the most despised character in all Poland. He perplexed us at the council of ministers—he ruined the duchy by expences in posting and couriers. I caused, one day, bounds to be put to this extravagant expence. This mission died, at length, a natural and glorious death, and the ambassador, very prudently, withdrew in the midst of hisses, which he shared in common with the author of this judicious

choice. Now, who was the cause of this? Why, M. Bignon and M. de Bassano conjointly: one had given him to the other. M. Morski was M. Bignon's buffoon at Warsaw; at Wilna he became flatterer to the duke, to which art M. Bignon had given him a wonderful tendency, as generally happens among all gentlemen of this description: nothing more was necessary, and the duke, taken in the bird-lime of the very gross flatteries of a man of no talents, did not hesitate to judge him capable, and to charge him with the direction of the most important affairs. So true is it that a man of talents, but who has a weak side, may become an idiot---a mere simpleton, if he suffer himself to be attacked on his weak side!

“ I regularly rendered an account of the net proceeds of M. de Morski's mission: the duke was not pleased with me for it, and, on his passing through Warsaw, would not hear one word against him, and assured me in the most positive tone, that M. Count Morski had rendered most important services. At length, the appearance of a Russian army, commanded by General Tormassow, who invaded the duchy about the middle of July, put an end to any favourable disposition which till then remained towards France. From that moment the Poles saw themselves exposed to become the prey of those whom they considered as beaten fifteen days before; they began to fear their return, and the chastisements which must necessarily result. All their zeal was then at an end.

“ Truth obliges me to declare first, that Lithuania, under the eyes of the Emperor---under the blessed hands of the Duke of Bassano, under his own

immediate government, furnished not more than two thousand men to the active army of the Emperor, and that the rest of the levies, by no means numerous for a country containing four millions of inhabitants, were not completely levied and equipped at the time of the army's retreating. And, secondly, that Volhinia, which had been incessantly represented to me as capable of furnishing fifty thousand men and thirty thousand horses; as presenting immense resources, as altogether ready to put themselves in motion, and only waiting for the signal—Volhinia towards which the eyes of all Warsaw were turned—that vast and opulent country, to my knowledge, had furnished but two men.

“Matters were arrived at that point when Prince Schwartzenberg entered Volhinia, that he could never find spies on whom he could depend, and that even the inhabitants had deserted their houses, and could not be found, wherever the army penetrated.

“With respect to myself, I declare, that I could not accomplish so much as to establish a correspondence in Volhinia, though I did not spare money to carry it into effect. Count Morski, who had answered for this province, was not able to extract one line from it.

“We may judge, from this mass of facts, what was the disposition of men's minds in Poland. It is by considering them that we can be set right in appreciating those circumstances which have had an influence in directing them.

“I resume my narrative: it will be found connected with military events; they cannot be separated. This necessarily obliges me to examine the

plan which Napoleon had formed against Russia. He might have had two.

“ 1st, To march on Moscow, in the hopes that this *coup-de-main* would cut off the chief resources of the enemy; to burn Toula, the principal manufactory for arms in Russia; to search out and foment discontents and discontented persons, which were supposed to be very numerous at Moscow, especially as Moscow was considered the rival of Petersburg; to force the Emperor of Russia by all means to sign a peace, the bases of which would be the cession of all the Polish provinces and the resumption of the yoke of the continental system, which Russia had taken the liberty to shake off, and also the giving up of Riga and Archangel as places of surety.

“ 2d, To separate the entire of the Polish provinces from the Baltic to the Black Sea: to take post upon the Dwina and the Borysthenes; to organise Poland behind this rampart, and to carry on the war with the blood of Poles (that was the Emperor's expression), leaving a considerable French force in Poland, and giving the Poles a large subsidy.

“ These two notions contended for the preference, and succeeded each other in the head of Napoleon. During the winter which preceded the expedition, the minister of police never ceased to entertain me with them. On my side, I never ceased my endeavours to shew him the difficulties which would follow—to me they appeared palpable.

“ Every enterprise of very great importance, where we cannot make ourselves masters of all the chances, is a bad enterprise; every enterprise in

which the failure of success is attended with a complete change in the position of him who embraces it, is certainly one of great temerity, and consequently one of the most dangerous. It is inconceivable how matters of such vast importance can be made to depend on *perhapses*.

The French governor of a strong place in the course of the last winter that preceded the expedition, sent Napoleon some documents and details relative to the disposition of the people as manifested in Germany, to which he received the following answer. "I asked you for authentic reports, and not for German pamphlets." At Dresden also during the armistice in 1813, the King of Westphalia having transmitted to him the information which his ministers had collected in different courts of Germany, the Emperor sent him his letter back with these words written in the margin "*impertinencies*."

"To march on Moscow, to burn Toula, to meet with malcontents—all this is very fine, agreeable to the habit which had been contracted, of going to dictate peace to the enemy's capital—to carry every thing with a mighty noise, and to search every place for the enemies of the government; but who was to guarantee to the Emperor that all this would end the war with Russia? That the Emperor has no resemblance to any other, or to those to which he had been in the habit of dictating.

"With the latter, when a sovereign leaving his capital is driven to the limits of his states, how can he escape the cruel necessity of signing a distressing peace? But how does this necessity arise in Russia? He who said that this empire had both space and

time for him, knew that country well—he had measured it, and had assigned it a force which is exclusively its own. Napoleon treated all this as a chimaera, as *ideology*, and whilst from one end of Europe to the other, every one, even down to the lowest ranks, was tracing out this march for the Russians, Napoleon pretended that they could not bear the idea of the taking of their capital, and that the most complete submission would anticipate such a misfortune. Read every thing which the *Moniteur* has said of Moscow the Holy, of Moscow the Great—of the respect of the Russians for that city; all the flatterers never said any thing else.

“ The second plan was not better than the first. Napoleon reckoned on one hundred and fifty thousand Poles; he proposed to add fifty thousand French, and a large subsidy. But it was not two hundred thousand men which could force Russia to divest herself of such valuable provinces as those of Poland. That empire could for a very long time oppose very superior forces to the supposed number of two hundred thousand enemies. Besides the Dwina and Borysthenes are not barriers during the six months of frost common in these countries. What then could prevent the clouds of Cossacks which Russia has always at her disposal to penetrate in a hundred places through a cordon of more than four hundred leagues? In such a supposition, which was that of the continuation of the war, the Emperor would have had for a long course of years to have come every spring to establish himself in Poland, and to direct the operations in person; for the most cruel experience had already taught him what he

was to expect from his lieutenants. He would be under the necessity every year of sending corps of fresh troops into Poland, a portion of the money of France would take the same route, for it is always in that manner that he would be obliged to end. It would be curious to know the amount of the money conveyed to Poland and Saxony during the last two campaigns.

“ The second plan, though less hazardous than the first, was not less efficacious: the first was too rapid in its operations, the second not sufficiently so. Napoleon had not calculated that when engaged with Russia, to conquer was nothing, but that to sign a peace was every thing? that there was no way of forcing her to that, and that so long as that signature was withheld, whatever the victories might be, that nothing was accomplished.

“ The Emperor had decided in favour of the first plan. It is inconsistent with his character—of that character which enters without distinction into all his transactions, and with which he does every thing, to attach himself to any plan which is not attended with some *eclat*, with some bustle, in which time, that spring of every thing, with which he is so little acquainted, enters as something into the account.

“ As soon as he threw himself into Lithuania, and that he saw the Russian army flying before him, he thought of nothing else but of pursuing it, interpreting the system, which was preparing his destruction, as a sign of terror and affright on the part of his enemy. Success had spoiled him to such a degree, that he gave it no other interpreta-

tion.—The Emperor had entered Russia by Lithuania, the King of Westphalia by the Duchy of Warsaw.

“ All these forces may be considered as an army, the left of which was formed by the two corps under the Dukes of Tarentum and of Reggio, before Riga and Potolsk. The centre by the army of the Emperor, the right by the King of Westphalia, the left by the Austrians and Saxons.

These two corps were during the whole campaign before Polotzk and Riga. They lined the Dwina, and prevented any sortees from these points on the part of the enemy.

Marshal Macdonald opposed a vigorous resistance against the repeated attempts of the Russians to debouch from Riga. He was never worsted in any rencontre, but maintained his position with much credit till the moment when it became necessary for him to follow the retreat of the grand army. The measures which the Prussians when they separated from his army were dictated by the respect which they bore to his personal character. Till the 18th of October, the Duke of Reggio and Marshal St Cyr maintained their position near Polotsk against forces under Wittgenstein, much superior: both these generals at once increased their laurels, and the glorious wounds with which they were covered. It was these two corps that repulsing the first corps of the Russian army of Moldavia, secured the passage of the Beresina, which without their successful co-operation, could never have taken place, particularly in driving the enemy's divisions back that had marched from Borizou. Though a

fault in Admiral Tchitsagoff in bringing a part of his army into action instead of lining the shores of the Beresina, it was fortunate for the French, who had the admiral defended the Beresina, could not have passed it.

“The disposition of the Russian army almost corresponded with that of France. At the opening of the campaign, the left of that army, commanded by Prince Bagration, was formed on the Bog facing the Duchy, and in the immediate direction of Warsaw.

“The army of the King of Westphalia was opposed to it.

“The retrograde movement of the Grand Russian Army had drawn to it that of the army of the Prince Bagration. The Emperor, in order to prevent this re-union, had ordered Marshal Davoust to manœuvre, who advanced from Wilna on Minsk and Bobrnsk. The King of Westphalia followed in the rear of this movement. When the first Polish corps beheld the Russians, they could not be restrained, and they inconsiderately threw themselves upon them, and were severely beaten in the battles of Romanou and of Mish. Prince Bagration ably escaping from Davoust, and making good his junction after the battle off Mohilow, Davoust furious at seeing his prey escape him, threw the blame on the King of Westphalia. The Emperor, already irritated by the complaints which the depredations committed by his army had excited, determined to unite it with the corps of Marshal Davoust, and to place him under the Marshal's command. The Prince saw his dignity outraged in this: he was dis-

posed to recal all his troops which were in the army; a bickering took place between the two brothers: the King took the road towards his own states with his guards; he passed by the way of Warsaw, where he caused me a considerable loss of time by his eternal talkativeness. He was attacked with the dysentery, which was thinning the army. Nothing more has been heard of him, with the exception of his flight from Cassel, and the end of his reign, which has done no more good for Westphalia than that of his brother for France.

“ By the movement of Marshal Davoust, the Emperor had drawn to himself the whole of the Polish army. They wished, and their wish seems to have had a reasonable foundation, that all the national troops, united under the national colours, should march in Volhinia, in a parallel direction to that of the army which was advancing in Lithuania. Their attempts were frustrated by their troops being called to join the Grand Army, and by their dispersion through all the corps of that army on all points of the line. This dispersion rendered the administration of them impracticable, and nobody knew where to find them.

The Saxon corps, which formed the extreme rear, had been placed under the command of General Regnier, who was substituted on account of the dismissal of General Vandamme. This corps was stationed in the environs of Slonim. The Austrians marched on Mohilow.

“ From this disposition it may be seen that Napoleon, faithful to his two grand principles, which are to draw every thing to himself, and never to

look to what is behind or on the side of him, had drawn all the troops into his centre of the action, without calculating on the danger of leaving his right flank and his rear entirely uncovered. By those means it happened that while he was marching on Smolensk and Moscow, an enemy might march on Warsaw, on Posen, and interpose between him and France. Let any one take the map in his hand, and judge for himself. Now let us see precisely what was preparing, and what happened in the manner which I am about to relate :

“ Whilst the Emperor was running straight forward, a terrible storm was collecting in Volhinia, on the borders of the Duchy.

“ The Russian General Tormazow was collecting an army in this province : this army could do three things ;

“ 1. March through the interior of Volhinia, in order to join the Grand Army in Russia ;

“ 2. Place itself in the Emperor's rear, by re-ascending the Bog, and taking post on the Niemen ;

“ 3. Or throw itself on the Duchy of Warsaw.

“ It chose to adopt the second plan, confining itself just to touch upon the Duchy.

“ Here commenced a new order of things, such as I little suspected, and the tardy knowledge of which made me form a resolution that I would never have any thing more to do with the gentlemen with whom I unfortunately found myself connected. I discovered that there was no possibility of my being able to serve those who employed me ; that the surest way of displeasing them was by giving them information and enlightening them ; and that the only

way in which I could obtain a hearing from them was, to tell them, not matters of fact, and what existed, but that which, agreeably to their illusions and convenience, they wished to find existing. This character, peculiar to those spoiled children of fortune, was never changed, even for one day during all the time that I had any thing to do with them. It was Napoleon himself, who, when at the height of his power—in the very centre of all the enjoyments which vanity could produce, who created that species of character which is naturally repugnant to all truth, and which he has found so fatal. All the contemptible apes which surrounded him did not fail to imitate him, and it was happily discovered that all his government was spoiled, because the master himself was so.—Deplorable effect of the despotism of the one and the meanness of the others! Now how is it possible that a man, who listens only to his conscience, who sees only with his own eyes, who only acts agreeably to his notion of duty, can maintain a proper understanding with people who have inverted every thing? This is precisely what happened to me from that date till the time of my departure from Poland.

“ I saw the army of General Tormassow forming; I gave information of this; I furnished reports which every thing convinced me to be correct. The Duke disputed every point, made subtractions as his fancy directed, and an army which I estimated at forty thousand men, he made to consist of twelve thousand. General Tormassow entered the Duchy from the 16th to the 18th of July. It is easy to conceive what a sensation that must have produced

there. In an instant all on the right bank of the river passed over to the left: fugitives were arriving from all sides; consternation reached Warsaw.—Vengeance was feared on the part of the Russians, who, as it was reported, looked upon this city as the very focus of all their calamities: there was nothing now heard but of flying before those who only a few days before were spoken of as about to make their submission—the ordinary effect of presumption. This change of scene completed that of public opinion—it never rose again.

“The people, strangers as they always are to political movements, the expences of which they more frequently pay than they gather the fruits—the people were talking in a high strain of stopping the Ambassador, the Council of Confederation, and all the Grandees, who, they said, were the authors of all these troubles, and of all the provocations which the Russians had received. This would have undoubtedly happened had the Russians made their appearance.

“There was not in the Duchy at that time twelve hundred men of disposable troops, nor were there four hundred in Warsaw; nevertheless the Duke wrote to me under the date of the 30th of July:—‘His Majesty has foreseen the offensive movement of the Russians.’ We shall see how.

“General Regnier was, as has been said before, left in the command of the last body of troops of the French rear. His corps amounted to sixteen or eighteen thousand men, Saxons and Poles. This force appeared to be sufficient according to the false idea which it pleased some men to form of the army

of General Tormassow. I had given a detailed account of this force, but to no purpose; it was obstinately determined to reject my advice, and to substitute calculations absolutely fantastical. Matters went so far that on the 25th of July, the Duke wrote to me—‘The Russians can have no more than a small number of indifferent troops in the position in which they now are, which are exposed as a mere forlorn hope: *every thing would be fair against the rabble which Tormassow has collected.*’ However this same rabble (*canaille*) had taken the liberty of carrying off the advanced guard of General Regnier; which were all made prisoners in the little town of Kobryn, on the very day that the Duke wrote to me in such polite terms.

“From that I distinctly saw, that as I addressed myself to men who were intentionally deaf and blind, that we were lost without resource: the army of General Tormassow then marched into Lithuania by the route of Brescz. That of General Regnier was joined by the army of Prince Schwartzenberg, and the two armies thus united, continued to act conjointly to the end of the campaign. They were thus the means of preserving the Duchy.

“The Duke’s incredulity was not my only evil as I was circumstanced; an insolence of a peculiar nature in which he indulged himself, and to which I was very sensible, must be added. The consternation at the approach of the Russians was extreme at Warsaw; the people were taken by surprise, without any means of defence. The Council knew this better, and sooner too than the public, but still maintained a good countenance; such symptoms of

confidence were shewn, that not even one packet was displaced in all the town; as to myself, personally, I had not even packed up a single paper, nor had I received one person less at my table. However, the Council foreseeing the approaching danger, had taken measures to secure a retreat, to save the government property, to establish a provisioal government during its absence, and to disarm the enemy by submissions: all this had been settled by an interior economy without communicating any part of the plan to the public. These measures resemble those which generally take place in similar cases. I gave an account of them; the following is the answer which a certain person thought he might take the liberty of sending: 'I shall not add another word as to the project of the retreat of the embassy, of the Ministers and of the Authorities, which appears to have been suggested by a sentiment which has been always known to inspire bad counsels.' This judicious remonstrance was seasoned with reflections on the good effect which the example of courage, given by the Archbishop might produce. This pleasantry indulged towards a man whose profession prevented him from returning that answer which first presents itself to the mind, was most assuredly ill placed, and appeared excessively ridiculous in a man who, at the time of the retreat from Wilna and from Leipsic, shewed himself as sensible as any man of the value of diligence timely applied.

" But to be the butt of the Duke's pleasantries, with respect to the most convenient personal measures, was not enough. I was to endure his irony in return for the most real services.

“ On the news of the invasion of the Duchy, the Emperor prescribed several measures, more or less adapted to circumstances. He desired me, amongst other things, to throw some thousands of men and some cannon upon the rear of the enemy in Volhinia; it required no share of supernatural powers to perceive this, which was already accomplished by the almost magical creation of the division of Korinski; I informed the Duke of it in a dispatch, in which every action which I performed breathed zeal, and every expression which I made use of breathed respect for the service of the Sovereign, as is our bounden duty at all times. He answered me, on the 30th of July, in the following words; ‘ You tell me that the dispositions which I requested you to make, were previously adopted; his Majesty will be very glad to find that you succeeded in divining his intentions.’ See to what lengths the spirit of servility had led the minds of some! it was not even allowed to anticipate the thoughts of the Prince, in order to serve him. Every thing must proceed and emanate from him; better let all things perish, rather than not to leave him the honour of having created every thing. Thus it happened that when the Russians were marching at their ease through the Duchy, the Duke wrote to me on the 23d of July, that his Majesty had foreseen the offensive movements of the Russians—the truth is, we had not a man, and the enemy were at our gates.

“ I perceived from that moment that my correspondence was displeasing, and that it was not written in the sense which was liked. My secretaries of embassy more perfectly broken in the *manège*

(riding-school) of our foreign relations than what I was, more pliant, and besides, being great admirers of the political juggling used by our cabinet, told me frequently that I would never succeed ; that truth was not liked ; that nice, pretty little bulletins, well-filled with anecdotes, even scandalous ; that a few precious insurrections very ingeniously contrived, would give quite a different idea of my talents than these mournful truths, which were too strong to be relished. It was in vain for them to point out that the road of advancement was closed against me, and even that of dotations ; to propose for my model, the correspondence of M. Bignon, who, in his important mission to the army, had, without even the shadow of political interest, found out the secret of keeping up a correspondence of such high importance, which charmed at once both the duke and the Emperor, and had placed its author in the rank of the first ministerial correspondent, and almost that of the first diplomatist of France : not finding the same resources of mind as they, I remained obstinate in my own opinion, and firm to unfortunate truth, for which we should do so much the more, as she is destined to do less for us.

“ I proceed to give an account how affairs were managed. The loss of horses which the army had experienced, above all, the want of oats caused recourse to be had to the Duchy. A courier arrived one day from Wilna in great haste, who was the bearer of an order to form, forthwith, considerable magazines of bread and of meat at Modlin, of grain at a place called Meretz, and to purchase three thousand horses ; money was every where promised

for every thing. From the eagerness with which this demand was made—from the rapidity with which letters, more and more pressing, succeeded each other, it might be thought that the destiny of the world depended on that supply. Immediately all was bustle in the duchy. Not a crown arrives: contracts were made but with infinite trouble; letters addressed to the intendant general on the 24th of July, were answered on the 10th of September: in the mean time the army had marched, other arrangements had taken place; and one morning we were informed that neither our oats or horses were any longer wanted.

“This is the proper place to speak of the Austrian army. I have seen prejudices respecting them to prevail in Poland, which justice obliges me to endeavour to dissipate in this book, as I have even endeavoured to do in the course of my embassy. The Poles have not always judged fairly on this head: they considered Austria as but too happy when labouring on their business, making no account whatever of the dangers to which the actual co-operation might expose Austria on a future day, with regard to Gallicia. It was certainly a very remarkable sight to see Austria labouring to aggrandize Poland, which already partly formed from her spoils, was still destined to cost her so dear.

“It was curious to hear the tone in which certain Frenchmen spoke on this affair, and in what terms they expressed themselves upon that subject, which was entitled to their greatest respect. By the treaty of alliance Austria was to furnish thirty thousand men, under a commander to be named by himself.

The choice had fallen on Prince Schwartzberg: surely no chief could give us more guarantees. That army formed on the frontiers of Poland. It consisted of the best troops of that country, completely equipped, and provided with every thing. It advanced into Lithuania at the desire of the Emperor, and had already reached Ighumen, when it was recalled by the invasion of General Tormassow: it afterwards joined the Saxon corps, from which it did not separate.—They repulsed the Russians in Volhinia, and gained in the most brilliant manner the battle of Podubrie on the 12th of August, and maintained their ground against the enemy till the arrival of the Russian army of Moldavia. This army saved the duchy twice, and served, independantly of their private opinions, with a degree of ability and perseverance, which nothing could overcome nor shake, and its worthy chief directed and supported its spirit with that honour which forms so distinguished a feature in his noble character. During seven months that I was in contact with that army, I could not perceive any thing which turned it in the smallest degree aside from the most perfect line of fidelity to those obligations which their cabinet had contracted. This army did not spare itself in any manner, or upon any occasion; it fought for Poland as if it had been for Austria herself.

“ I took particular care to have the wants of this army provided for, and its generals seemed to appreciate my intentions.

“ One of the sources of the Emperor's hopes, when he attacked Russia, was the war which still subsisted between that country and Turkey. Strong

expectations were also formed of adding a Swedish war; as Finland was pointed out to Sweden as an object for her to recover. It was from a firm reliance on these two auxiliaries that we proposed to march against that powerful empire. All the grand political measures of the times corresponded with that conception, which could not be exalted too highly. The idea was, however, as chimerical as some of those which spring from the brain of Napoleon.—He had formed for himself, in his usual way, an imaginary Turkey, an imaginary Sweden; he had furnished these two governments with his own optics and his own passions. Because he himself could not endure repose, he had imagined that the Turks, the most inert of all nations, who never attack, and who feel much pain in coming to a resolution to stand on the defensive, would continue the war against Russia, which was offering to strip herself of her conquests in their favour. Traces of this expectation are found in the guarantee of the integrity of the Ottoman empire, inserted without any demand to that effect from the Porte, in the treaty with Austria. Because that for one hundred years back France has not ceased to incite Sweden against Russia, by pointing out Finland always as the principal political object.—Napoleon firmly believed that it was impossible that a more enlightened opinion on political subjects could be formed in Sweden—an opinion which might cause Sweden sincerely to renounce the possession of that country as being a perpetual object of dispute between them and a power which was much their superior in force, not to make it a desirable object to endeavour to

extinguish every spark of difference, and to avoid all those points of contact which, during the course of a century, had produced such a succession of broils between them, and had cost Sweden so dear. But to reason thus with Napoleon, would be to expose oneself to all his anathemas.

“ This latter policy had, however prevailed, and Sweden had begun to connect herself with Russia; Turkey had made peace; it was in vain to furnish the Emperor with proofs of this; this deranged him, and was incompatible with his ideas—there was no way of making him understand it. An aide-de camp who had been sent by his general to him at Smolensko, having insisted on the existence of a treaty, the Emperor silenced him, by saying, ‘ You must be aware that I ought to know these things better than you.’ It was in the very same manner that at Dresden he obstinately opposed every proof of any change having taken place in the politics of the Rhenish confederation; but quite different when he was to be convinced that the army of Moldavia was about to be united to that of Volhinia, and that their junction would form a mass of force which might greatly annoy the rear of his army. I shall not recount the number of battles which I had to maintain against him, against the Duke of Bassano, against the French and Polish generals, against my own secretaries of embassy, in order to make them understand that they were about to have a powerful army opposed to them. One must have seen them returning to the charge in a hundred different ways, for the purpose of extenuating, explaining, commenting on every article of intelligence, in order that

they might enjoy the privilege of reposing on these pillows, which variety, presumption, and the fear of giving up their convenient illusions, the habit of listening only to themselves, and of despising others, substituted every day in the brains of men led astray by so many delirious impulses. I do not think any punishment can equal that which I experienced for the two months that the struggle continued.

“ On the 15th of August, in the midst of a *fete* which the King of Saxony was giving on the occasion of the Emperor's birth-day, I received the intelligence of the army of Moldavia having wheeled round, and being then in full march against us. I left the table forthwith, and dispatched a courier with the information. I let no opportunity pass without making a return of its force. The evidence which my calculations afforded, struck every one with despair. Will it be believed that when the combat was still maintained on the 8th of October, that on that day, when the duke was entirely overcome, and not having a word to say, he wrote to me, as if it were, to get rid of my unfortunate prepossessions: ‘ *I cannot do better than transmit your dispatch of the 5th to his Majesty; he does not expect such results.*’

“ After this let any man conceive in what manner business was to be transacted with gentlemen of such a description, and how it was possible that every thing in which they were concerned was not on the brink of ruin. Let him also conceive, if he can, what corruption was required to bring men to this point, who, in other respects, are sufficiently clear-headed; for it is evident from this, that they are

not sincere, or consistent with themselves, and that servility alone obscured that penetration and intelligence which we cannot help allowing them to possess on other occasions. However these epithets *enlightened*, (*eclairé*) and intelligence (*lumières*), do not equally belong to them all. I except the military characters, but only for the following reasons: they certainly know their trade, to march, attack, choose their ground, manœuvre before an enemy; I suppose that every thing of this kind, which they do, is for the best. But to judge respecting the general management and view of affairs, of the probability of even military events, into which any mortal of political consideration enters, there the thread slips through their fingers: there they are run a-ground. I was tormented for six months with the false reasonings of military men, whom, in other respects, I honoured; it was my curse.

“During two months they were proving to me that the Russians could not avoid coming to general engagements; as able logicians as those of the *Moniteur*, they one day raised the Russian force to colossal magnitude, the next reduced it to a pigmy stature. When the army of Moldavia appeared, the place was no longer tenable. I remember a Polish general, of great estimation among his countrymen, who, when dining with me, at the time when that army, after having disturbed the duchy very much, was crossing the frontiers of Lithuania, asked me, before forty persons, what I thought to be the direction which it was taking, and on my answering that Lithuania was most assuredly its object, he commenced

a warm and even an angry dissertation, to prove that it was returning to Volhinia, much better would it have been if it had not departed from it. They at Warsaw denominated this zeal, and regarded all those as luke-warm in the cause, who would not give themselves up to such illusions. Besides, they were cherished by the first military characters (*Coryphies*) among the French. The duke frequently signified to me, as well as General Dutailis, (the correspondent of the Prince of Neufchatel,) that the opinion of that prince was, that the army of Moldavia was endeavouring to form a junction with the grand Russian army, in the interior of Russia; such is the plain meaning of his dispatches of the 21st of September, and of the 18th of October. In the first he says, '*It is very difficult for the Russians to remain in Volhinia, after the great events which have taken place in the heart of Russia. The Russian government, which has need of all its forces to defend itself in the interior, cannot suffer a corps to remain so long a time, and at such a great distance from its grand army.*'

"That of the 18th of October says, '*The reports from the Russian army, gives us reason to think that it is reduced to below fifty thousand men, and that it finds itself in a very bad condition: the arrival of the army of Moldavia is impatiently expected.*'

"While the prince and the duke were thus contending with each other in mutual deception, that army was making forced marches on the Emperor's rear, in order to shut him up in Russia.

“ From these details one may judge what was my situation at Warsaw. That situation was aggravated from many causes :

“ 1. The conflicts on the subject of jurisdiction between the council of ministers and that of the confederation.

“ The council of confederation was hardly formed, when it wished to fly with its own wings, and to taste of power—the fruit of that accursed tree, to which every man wishes to stretch his hand as soon as he can reach it. The council was strongly impressed with the idea of its own importance. A secondary part would by no means satisfy it : to hear and receive petitions every day, and receive civic oaths, appeared a trifle to it, in comparison to those functions which the ancient Polish confederations enjoyed, before which all other powers disappeared. I was besieged with complaints about the idleness and inferiority of the part which it was acting. The marshal of the confederation frequently came to lay his complaints before me. On a hundred different occasions other members of the council endeavoured to engage me on this subject.

“ The council of ministers on their part acted most vigorously on the defensive. I was convinced of the justice of its rights ; I applied myself to make the complainants understand the difference between ancient and modern times ; the suspension of the ancient Polish forms, which could not take place in the actual state of the country ; the necessity which existed of considering the council as the means of arriving at the order which it was desirable to establish ; the little opportunity there was from the

momentary choice which had been made to raise their pretensions; the necessity of supporting the action of the government in moments of such great difficulty; in a word, the impossibility of persuading the Emperor and the King of Saxony, the one, that by creating the council he must have intended the abdication of the King of Saxony, the other, that he could not do better than abdicate in order to make room for them. The milder demands of sharing the power did not impose on me: I knew their tendency and effects. Most likely I did not succeed in persuading, but I succeeded in something much more important, namely, to avoid all *eclat*, and to prevent all conflict between the flags opposed to each other until both were dispersed.

“2. The continual encreasing distress of the duchy. Six weeks continued rain menaced the crops, had swelled up all the rivers, and caused dreadful ravages. Many articles useful in war belonging to the duchy had perished; the imposts had decreased, and wants increased. The more troops came, the more were the ravages extended; they must be supported, sick or well, equipped and provided with every thing. Warsaw was a magazine and a general hospital, the real place of arms of Poland, as Paris has been latterly of France. The daily distributions were raised from twenty-five to forty-six thousand rations, when the division of General Durette arrived at Warsaw. Never less than five thousand rations of forage were delivered, without reckoning six hundred horses in the town. Such great pillage it was found difficult to repress

among troops of ten different nations, which demanded, exacted, and took every thing.

“ During this time the devastations executed by the soldiers were proceeding. We were at the end of our patience and of our means; money failed altogether. From the extent of misery, those subject to contribution set all restraint at defiance, as always happens in such cases. We imagined that we might exact twenty-one millions of taxes of the arrears of 1810 and 1811, by taking them in provisions and necessaries. This is what maintained the troops during the time of their sojourning in, and in passing through the duchy: the people were relieved and satisfied, and the army supported; I never heard one complaint against the measure. With a little more economy in the manner of expenditure it would have been perfect.

“ 3. The Emperor, in announcing to me my mission to Warsaw, had informed me that it would be necessary to support a great establishment. It has been seen, that to keep up that immense establishment, in a country dearer than Paris, the moderate sum of one hundred and forty thousand francs had been assigned me; but that is the Emperor's way; he sets out in the most magnificent manner, but when payment is the word, he descends from his flight. The Revolution having stripped me of my patrimonial estate, and of my first church preferences, the Emperor, who has given away so bountifully, never having thought of informing himself whether I had a family, or whether I had any wants, and certainly never having learned it from me, (the

livings of modern ecclesiastics scarcely supplying the first necessities,) it may be easily seen that I could not do without the salary attached to my situation. This was the more necessary, because in France the practice of the foreign office is, to burden diplomatic agents with all those advances which are made on them by different parts of the service; such for instance as couriers, and missions of spies, &c. I had even got to such lengths as to draw on Paris, in bills of exchange, to the amount of 80,000 francs. I requested permission of the duke, three times over, to open a credit in Warsaw, but could not force an answer from him. I wished to do it on his passing through Warsaw; he answered me like a man roused from a deep sleep. When the accounts were looked for, they were not to be found: to so great a degree did irregularity prevail with him. Eight days were spent in searching after them among all the persons who were employed. It was only in the month of February following that my dinner of the 1st of September was paid for, and my bills settled. The Emperor passed through Smolensk on the 18th of August. I cannot express with what anxiety I waited his resolution. So long as he did not pass beyond the Dwina, he appeared to me as attached to a known soil upon which one might set his foot, without fear of sinking; beyond appeared to be a sea without banks. This was a continual subject of my conversations with M. Andri, the only person from whom I never could conceal any thing. I very much wanted a person with whom I might share the foolish joys and foolish confidence with which I was surrounded. I have

said as much, and that was repeated which did not at all serve me. One must have seen what airs these little political bird organs, my secretaries of embassy played from the words of my mournful prognostics, the sound of which was heard as far as Wilna, and which did not increase the number of my friends.

“I was told by a very intelligent general officer, then aide-de-camp to the King of Naples, that orders were given to go into winter-quarters at Smolensk; but the Emperor having reconnoitered the ground upon which the battle of Volentino had been fought, and the lofty heights which had been carried with so much bravery by General Gudin’s divisions, could no longer contain himself, but exclaimed, ‘With such troops, one might go to the end of the world—to Moscow!’ Thus the fate of men and empires is frequently connected with mere trifles. The battle of Moskwa at length took place. The duke enclosed me the letter which the Prince of Neufchatel had written to him the evening before, in presence of the enemy: joy and hopes shone forth in it in a most conspicuous manner: ‘*The enemy holds out,*’ says the prince; ‘*We are about to finish the business:* to morrow will be one of the grandest epochs in history.’ Good man! who made the fate of an empire as long and as large as Russia, depend on the fate of a single battle!!!”

“The proclamation of the emperor to his army, in the form of an order of the day, is in the same tone: it announces the conquest of peace and of winter quarters. On the news of this victory, every head in Warsaw became giddy with joy: the object

was supposed to be attained. The entry into Moscow completed the charm: but what did all this come to, when, from the most manly resolution, which a people ever formed of themselves, the grand prey was rescued from the conqueror. All these mad joys vanished with the smoke of that terrible conflagration.

“I confess that this event produced in me the strongest sensation which I ever felt. In vain have revolutionary scenes been repeated and prolonged; they never succeeded in hardening me against the calamities which we have witnessed. It was to no purpose that I beheld men consoling themselves over such evils with certain suitable expressions of sensibility, in the midst of the most abundant enjoyments: as for me, I had preserved a soul and feelings, and the greater the evils are, the greater are my sufferings. Whoever he may be that takes offence at this, I cannot help it, for most assuredly I shall never change. This weakness produced the following letter from the duke against me—from that man whose heart is represented to be the sanctuary of all the soft and amiable affections:—‘I am informed that you have been struck with the burning of Moscow, and that you have suffered the impression which that event made upon you to be noticed, when your part was rather to represent it under that point of view, which was proper to excite enthusiasm.’—Dispatch of the 4th of October.

“I must acknowledge that I merited this correction so much the more, as it proved the discernment of the duke, that this foolish sensibility affected in a greater degree, the heroic hardness of heart, with which I

found all bosoms furnished, against all the attacks which that catastrophe might cause them to experience. I know not to what impulse I am to ascribe it; but I cannot help saying (to the shame of that period of crimes and egotism), that I never found the least feeling with respect to that event in all that surrounded me, or in all that I saw at Warsaw. The political face of that frightful event was only seen.—What do I say? glanced at, and that only for a few moments, for the *suite* of pleasures and manner of living never stopped even for a moment. I was indignant at this, I said so; I trembled with horror, when I heard a certain person proclaiming publicly, that Petersburg and Berlin should share the same fate, and that he would willingly be a candidate for the honour of lighting up the flame with his own hand. He may, since that time, have been able to perceive (by the manner in which I have treated him), the effect which these horrible words had on me.

“ My mind was distracted with investigating how it was possible that men, who were known to be good fathers, good brothers, faithful and delicate in their notions of friendship, could thus abjure the sentiments of nature, which they obeyed with pleasure in every other duty of life: how politics could silence the natural affections to that degree, that at the moment when a people has any difference with another, from that instant all the *characters* of humanity common to both, must necessarily disappear, and be utterly effaced. I am much deceived if this problem be not resolved by tracing it up to despotism, and to that want of feeling which it produces,

and which, united, have brought about such a change in the ideas of men as must of course have followed from the scenes of the Revolution,—from the conduct of the revolutionary government, particularly that of Napoleon ; from which it has resulted that men are no longer in the habit of considering (as was formerly done), politics as formed for society, but society for the political system.—Can every thing which has taken place for these twenty-five years past have any other meaning ; and have not the minds of all been formed and bent under the yoke of these horrible principles ?

“ When the Emperor was burying himself in the heart of Russia, the Russian army was issuing forth from Volhinia, and was putting itself in motion for the purpose of accomplishing the project so often announced, of cutting off the rear of the army of the Emperor, and that on the very day of his entering into Moscow. It was a very striking spectacle, and at the same time very contrary to the ideas which had hitherto regulated military movements, to see an army advancing in a vast open country, at the same time leaving a powerful hostile force far in the rear, without sufficient means to stop its progress. The Emperor publicly boasted, that he himself was the only general in Europe, who understood the art of carrying on war on a grand scale. The late campaigns must subtract considerably from his pretensions to this exclusive talent. We have seen him constantly turned—enveloped : gaining battles, and losing armies and campaigns, as if armies and battles were any thing else than the very means of assuring the success of campaigns.

“The army of Volhinia amounted to sixty-six thousand men; that of the Prince of Schwartzenberg did not exceed thirty-six thousand. This disproportion, however, did not prevent the duke from writing to me on the 4th of October: ‘Prince Schwartzenberg has, let some say what they please, a sufficient force to maintain himself against the enemy.’ This general, whose information was better than that of the duke, immediately commenced his retreat, which it was very incumbent on him to do. However, the duke wrote to me on the 29th of September: ‘Prince Schwartzenberg is placing himself behind Turia; this movement is nothing more than a manœuvre; and is by no means to be considered as a retreat.’

“This circumstance impelled me to examine into the true meaning of these legerdemain contrivances. Upon searching into them, I discovered that the duke, not content with deceiving strangers, endeavoured also to deceive his own agents; for what other name can we give to such deceptions? I presumed so far as to flatter myself that the duke did not hope to persuade me that the retreat of an inferior army before a vastly superior force, could be confined to a voluntary manœuvre, altogether independent of the impulse given to it by the movement of the enemy: but he wished to deceive, and he complied, at the same time, and perhaps without clearly perceiving it, with the habits of his own mind, and the wants of his situation. The retrograde movement continuing, the duchy was invaded, and the Cossacks penetrated even to the very gates of Warsaw; for a few days an universal flight prevailed. This

was the moment which the duke took to write to me, under date of the 2d of October : 'The retrograde movement of Prince Schwartzenberg, most undoubtedly, is not success, but it by no means leads to any real danger.' Under date of the 4th of October, 'The retrograde movement of Prince Schwartzenberg may, perhaps, be nothing but a manœuvre, for the purpose of drawing the Russians into a snare, and of taking all advantages over them.'

"One can easily conceive all that I had to suffer in reading such dispatches. Although it was prescribed to me to speak in that sense, I could never bring myself to it. I confined myself to allowing every man to speak for himself every thing he pleased to say, not giving any one to suppose that what was said had the sanction of my personal authority, which could not be given to assertions equally repugnant to truth and common sense. It was upon this occasion, that I had an opportunity of discovering two things, very important with respect to business, namely,—The influence of the trade on such as merely belong to the trade, and the very little fruit which is derived from the practice of political jugglery. My secretaries of embassy did not accustom themselves to the practice of my stoical sincerity. They took it into their heads that lying made a part of the character which I was to play, to impose and to deceive ; they decorated this vile practice with all the names received in the vocabulary of the trade. They did more : they put them into circulation, and went about filling the city with accounts of victories which received their birth and death on the same day. What happened from this ? Is it the

secretaries of the embassy who say so, or the ambassador himself? was the usual expression. If the former, give no credit to it; if the latter, we will believe it. One day I heard a lady, who holds the first rank in society, say, 'Mr. — has announced to me a victory which has not taken place; I will, therefore, never believe him again in any thing.' Worthy reward for all his low juggling tricks, still more absurd from the circumstance of the means of detecting them offering themselves on every side!

"Very often, in the dispatches, which, agreeably to my orders, I read to the council of ministers, corps were said to be marching which never existed, such as were expected were swelled up as high as they pleased: in short, I had to give publicity to a long unbroken roll of the most clumsy and disgusting falsehoods that ever were invented. One day as I was reading, to my great vexation, to the council, one of these dispatches, which mentioned the arrival of a corps which had taken time enough to make the tour of Europe, from the time that it had been first announced, a general laugh burst forth, a cruel merriment of the inconvenience attached to the part of reciter of the Duke of Bassano's assertions.

"The invasion of the duchy by the Russians, gave place to some singular scenes at Warsaw. It was then that the absurd violence of General Dutailis' character was displayed in all its extent. This invasion was effected under the orders of General Czernicheff, (whom we all knew at Paris) at the head of three thousand Cossacks. His object was to destroy the magazines in the duchy, while in the

mean time the army was defiling in Lithuania. That army was known to be on its march ; Warsaw might well be considered as its object ; it is impossible to see clearly behind that curtain which the Cossacks form in the van, and on the wings of the Russian armies. . Terror was then at the height in Warsaw : every thing was prepared for a departure, which, this time at least, appeared to be indispensable. As for my private opinion, I never entertained the supposition that Warsaw itself would be invaded, as I believed that the Russian army was destined to strike a more deadly blow, namely, that of cutting off the retreat of the French army. At the sight of the enemy, General Dutailis dreamed of defending an immense town, open on every part, and for this purpose, he thought of making use of from fifteen to eighteen hundred dismounted horsemen, who happened to be at Warsaw. As they were in want of horses, he set about rumaging the whole town, putting all the horses in requisition, and the better to insure success in this grand measure, he caused the gates to be shut for three days, a plan which prevented nobody from leaving the town, by means of the breaches, from the levelling the ground on that part of the town which is not situated on the Vistula. After three days of imprisonment and vexations, he was enabled to procure forty-two horses proper for cavalry : but there was no such things as bridles, saddles, or boots. Such a sorry remount made no amends for the discontent and exasperation which the violence of the measure had excited in the minds of all men, and the still greater violence with which the measure itself was executed ; which always

happens in every case where the form and manner of doing a thing are more regarded than the substance, and gives the finishing stroke by spoiling all. The Princess Dominic a Radziwil, a lady of a most decided character, said, that it was enough to have been exposed to the loss of two millions of francs in rents, and that she would blow any man's brains out, who would come to carry off a horse to which she was very much attached.

“As soon as the gates were again opened, the higher order of the inhabitants disappeared. I never saw them again. I must transcribe a proclamation on this occasion, which General Dutaillis thought it his duty to publish, in order that he might raise the courage of the Poles, whom he thought somewhat dismayed.

“ ‘Poles, the enemy is at your gates; the Tartars are inundating the right bank of the Vistula. You must arm yourselves, and *I see nothing but packing up*. The great Napoleon looks down on you from the summits of the towers of Moscow (which was burned a month before): to arms, and deserve to be addressed by him in these words. Poles, I am satisfied with you.’ It was with this burlesque style, and with such strange ideas, that this gentleman hoped to animate the Poles, and, most likely, to give them an idea of French taste and politeness.

“While these things were going on in the Duchy more woeful scenes were taking place in Russia. The Emperor quitted Moscow. The necessity for this departure had been laid before him long before. He himself alone put it off, from a disposition of mind peculiar to himself, impatience of repose, which car-

rying him with the same rapidity, and the same charm, over every side of a question, causes him not to attach himself to any, and loses an immense time in running them over.

“ The Emperor acts with the greatest rapidity when he has taken his part; but it is a mistake to suppose that he is quick in taking that part; he loiters (to make use of a common expression) and that is what happened to him at Moscow: he expected peace there with the most firm assurance; he did not see a single Russian that he did not take for one who was sent to beg peace in the most suppliant manner. He was astonished when he did not see ambassadors arrive charged with the commission of suing for it. His mind unfixed and uncertain was carrying him to every kind of project. At one time the day was fixed for commencing the march to St. Petersburg, namely the 29th of September; the Duke informed me of this in a dispatch of the 28th. At another time his direction was changed to Toula and the south of Russia, that was the great road to Pultowa. In the midst of these fluctuations, time was going on, and the winter was approaching, concealing its rigours behind the ambush of a season unknown, and never equalled in fineness in these climates. The bulletins of the last days of October mention that the weather was as fine as in France during the most brilliant journeys to Fontainebleau: notwithstanding he was obliged to quit Moscow on the 16th of October. The retreat, properly speaking, had begun on the 14th. From that time a new universe appeared before my eyes, the great change which had happened in the world is dated from that time.

“ I was charged with communicating this sad intelligence to the council of ministers, deadening the blow as much as possible. Amidst the most formidable menaces against Petersburg next campaign (nothing less than burning it was determined), the duke designedly lost himself, by displaying various projects, all of which proved to me that the Emperor had no fixed plan. He spoke of marching to the South of Russia: and, in reality, that march was carried into effect as far as Kaluga. He said that Smolensk afforded a formidable point of support for all the operations of the army. It always appeared evident to me that the Emperor marched at hazard, and had no fixed plan. His conversation in Warsaw confirmed me in that belief.

“ It was but a little matter to inform the council of the retrograde motion of the army, that plunged them in despair: it was necessary to prevail on them to prepare every thing for the reception of that army on its return. That step presented a very great difficulty: it consisted in procuring the execution and keeping secret a measure too much extended in its own nature. It was moreover necessary to withdraw the council from those reproaches which were addressed to them from Wilna, and to withdraw myself from the cries of those who looked upon every precautionary measure as an alarm, and every man of precaution as an alarmist; for in that situation were we then.

“ I had calculated that the army would arrive on the Vistula about the 15th of December, that it would experience great privations; consequently I made a demand of having provisions and forage made ready

for three hundred thousand men, and fifty thousand horses, together with all the things proper to replace whatever may be lost, or much worn on the march. Such a large storage of provisions could not take place in secret, nor be done in public, without exciting great alarms. On this subject arrangements were made with the agents of administration, for the purpose of avoiding all eclat, and disguising the motives as far as possible. We succeeded, and in passing through Posen on the 29th of December, the Prefect informed me that his contingent was ready, and that nobody had felt any uneasiness.

“ The duke transmitted to me the expression of the Emperor’s dissatisfaction with respect to the want of co-operation on the part of the duchy. He wrote me word that the duchy had done nothing—that was his expression.

“ I discovered that he was imposed upon by General Dutailis, who, in his correspondence with the Prince of Neufchatel, whose creature (*l’ame damnée*) he was, had made the most false representation of the conduct of the duchy. This led to an explanation, in the course of which I found no difficulty in demonstrating to him that the accusation against the duchy was made without any knowledge of its finances, or of what it had done, or was preparing to do. He himself agreed that he was ignorant on these different subjects, and he must have understood, from the tone which I adopted in speaking with him, what were the sentiments which unfounded denunciations, dictated by ignorance, and a desire of encreasing his own value in the eyes of his employers, excited in my mind. But in order to secure the duchy against a re-

newal of such hostile attacks, I employed the council in drawing up and publishing a fair account of their administration from the opening of the campaign, which was to be addressed to the king previously to its being communicated to the public. This cut short all the attacks of malevolence. It is one of the things for which the council expressed their gratitude to me in the warmest terms. When I informed the duke of the measures which I had adopted, with respect to the army, he approved of them in the strongest manner, but not being able to divest himself altogether of his ordinary notions, he pointedly observed to me, that I was under a great mistake, in supposing that the army experienced all the wants which I imagined. But the principal opposition arose from the persons in subordinate situations, with whom I was surrounded: they could not form an idea that the army could be reduced to seek a refuge on the Vistula. In the habit of never entertaining any doubt upon any subject—of calculating only on their side—of speaking in the most contemptuous terms of every thing which proceeded from the enemy, these men sent forth cries of astonishment, and exclaimed, as against a sacrilege, when any one presumed to indulge in the slightest reasoning upon any thing that was then passing. Continual combats were to be kept up with this presumptuous and unthinking race, to whom the revolution was every thing, and the experience of past ages absolutely nothing.

“ Their astonishment was visible when it was announced that winter quarters were to be taken up between the Vistula and the Oder, provided the army could have the good fortune to arrive there. From

these circumstances, a deep-rooted horror of presumption and presumptuous men (that parent of so many disasters) has been fixed in my breast, which nothing has been able to overcome. It so happened that I had an example well calculated to correct the errors of these rash young men.

“ The Emperor had sent to Warsaw General Konopka, by descent a Pole, a colonel of a regiment of Lancers, very much esteemed, who had particularly distinguished himself at the battle of Albufera against the English. He had been raised to the rank of general, and made colonel of the second regiment of Lancers of the guard, which he was partly to recruit in the duchy. He spent many months at Warsaw. It is impossible to imagine the blusterings with which he and his troop made the town ring. When they saw themselves 500 strong, they supposed themselves able to support the heavens on the points of their lances. The general was persuaded that he might amuse himself with the intelligence with which he was furnished respecting the approach of the enemy—that he might even brave and provoke them with his little troop, and prolong his residence in the town of his birth, Slonim, apparently for the purpose of enjoying for some time longer the homage of his fellow-citizens. What happened? This man, so confident, was carried off on the 19th of October, at three o'clock in the morning, together with his regiment, his military chest, and all the effects belonging to his corps. Happy had he himself been the only victim of his imprudent blustering! but he enveloped in his misfortune the flower of the families of Poland, and the unfortunate con-

traitors who had contributed to furnish that regiment. France here lost a considerable sum, which the Emperor had advanced for the first expences in the formation of this corps, so soon dissolved.

“ In the mean time the Emperor arrived at Viasma and at Smolensk, after having lost all his horses. There the curtain fell down which had concealed him from my sight for a time, which I thought so very long. Will it be believed that the French ambassador at Warsaw had passed fourteen long days without hearing a word about him? That however was the fact. The time and suspense were horrible—I foresaw a catastrophe. With my eyes constantly fixed upon the map I marked out the point of Borisow, as the place where the fate of the world would be decided: that was the passage of the Beresina. I followed the movements of all the *corps d’armée*; I saw them advance towards a common centre; my uneasiness was extreme—I foresaw the calamity in its full extent. The Poles and some of those who were about me, opposed this idea as much as they could. The Russians had made themselves masters of the French magazines of Minski; they had carried Borisow, and lined the Beresina. The Austrians and Saxons had succeeded in the battle of Izabelin, on the 19th of November, in repelling a corps of the Russian army, formed for the most part from the army of Moldavia, and which was endeavouring to form a junction with it. It was only the 2d of December, that I was informed of the passage of the Beresina. The duke, in his usual way, made it a glorious victory. I recollect, on this occasion, that when I imparted it to General Dutaillis, he answered, that the star of Napo-

lebn had never before shone with more brilliant lustre. To such a degree had these gentlemen learned to substitute servile forms, and revolutionary phrases, in place of ideas, with which they were utterly unprovided. This very man, on the 6th of December, the day of the anniversary of the Emperor's coronation, wrote to the council of ministers, signifying to them, that if he were not placed in the ceremony just opposite the ambassador of France, that he would come and take that place with a battalion. Mark—he was no more than the mere military commandant at Warsaw. Behold the effect of the pride of a commandant among men, who, from their spirit, are only formed for obedience! I was humbled for my country sake to see a superior agent of the French government expose himself to the ridicule which this proposition excited in the council.

“The 10th of December at length arrived.

“I had just received a dispatch from the Duke of Bassano, announcing the speedy arrival of the *corps diplomatique*, which had passed the summer at Wilna. I was replying and pointing out the inconvenience of its residence in an open town, with the enemy in front, when suddenly the doors of my apartments were thrown open, and a tall man entered, who, as he approached, supported himself on one of my secretaries of embassy—“Come with me,” said this phantom. His head was enveloped in black taffety, his face was lost in the mass of fur within which it was sunk. A double armour of boots and fur made his walk unwieldy. In short, it was a species of apparition. I rose, accosted him, and catching some traits of his profile I recognised him, and said, “Ah! Is

it you, Caulaincourt? where is the Emperor?" "At the hotel d'Angleterre. He expects you." "Why did he not alight at the palace?" "He wishes not to be known." "Are you in want of any thing?" "Give us some Burgundy and Malaga." "The cellar, the house, and all things else are at your service; but whither are you going?" "To Paris." "And where is the army?" "It is gone," said he, turning up his eyes to Heaven. "But what of the victory of Beresina, and the 6000 prisoners of the Duke of Bassano?" "That is all gone, by * * *. Some hundreds of men have escaped—We had something else to do than to guard them." Then taking him by the arm, I said, "It is time that all the faithful servants of the Emperor should unite in telling him the truth." "Ah! what a failure," said he, "but I have not to reproach myself with not having foretold it."

"I hurried out and arrived at the hotel d'Angleterre about half-past one o'clock. A Polish *gend'armée* guarded the gate; the master of the hotel examined me, hesitated a little, and then allowed me freely to pass the threshold of his house. I saw a small carriage body placed on a sledge made of four pieces of fir: it had stood some crashes, and was much damaged. There were two other open sledges which had served for conveyance to General Lefebvre Desnouettes, another officer, the Mameluke Rustan, and a valet. This was all that remained of so much grandeur and magnificence. I thought I beheld the winding sheet carried before the great Saladin.

"The door of a room on the ground-floor was mysteriously opened. A short parley took place.

Rustan recognised me, and admitted me. Preparations were making for dinner ; the Duke of Vicenza came, introduced me to the Emperor, and left me with him. He was in a small cold lower apartment, and had the window-shutters half closed, the better to preserve his incognito. An awkward Polish servant kept blowing at a fire of green wood, which, rebel to her efforts, diffused with a loud cracking far more water over the stove than heat in the apartment. This spectacle of the degradation of human greatness had no charms for me. It was passing directly from the scenes at Dresden to this situation in a wretched inn. I had not seen the Emperor since that period, and I cannot describe what a crowd of new and painful sensiments assailed my heart.

“ The Emperor was, according to his custom, walking about his apartment. He had come on foot from the bridge of Praga to the hotel d’Angleterre. I found him wrapped up in a superb pelisse, lined with green, and with magnificent gold Brandenburghs. The covering of his head was a kind of fur cap, and his boots were also surrounded with fur.—“ Ah! Monsieur the ambassador !” said he to me smiling.

“ I approached quickly, and with that accent which the feeling I experienced could only have excited or excused in a subject towards his sovereign, I addressed him thus : “ You look well. You have made me very uneasy ; but at length you are here. I am happy to see you.” This was spoken with a rapidity and a tone which ought to have shewn him what was passing within me, but he, unfortunate as he was, did not perceive it. A moment after I helped him off with his pelisse. “ How are you off in this

country," said he. Then returning to my own character, and placing myself at the distance from which emotions excusable in the circumstances in which I was placed had withdrawn me, I proceeded to trace with the precautions necessary to be observed with all sovereigns, and particularly with a prince having such a temper as he whom I had to deal with, the actual state of the duchy. It was not brilliant: I had that very morning received the report of an affair which had occurred on the Bug near Krislow, in which two newly raised battalions had thrown down their arms on the second discharge. I had also been informed that out of 1200 horses belonging to these troops, 800 had been lost from want of care on the part of the new soldiers, and that 5000 Russians with cannon were marching on Zamosk.

"I urged on the ground of prudence, of the dignity of the Emperor and the confederation, the quiet removal of the embassy and the council before the arrival of the enemy; I pointed out the inconvenience of the diplomatic body residing at Warsaw, and spoke to him of the distress of the duchy and the Poles. This last idea he opposed, and asked with vivacity, "Who has ruined them?" I replied, "What has been doing for these six years. The scarcity of last year and the continental system deprive them of all commerce." At these words his eyes were lighted up.

"He proceeds, "Where are the Russians?" I told him. "And the Austrians?" "I have not heard of them for a fortnight." "General Regnier?" "Nor of him neither"—I informed him of all the duchy had done for the subsistence of the

army. He knew nothing of it. I spoke to him of the Polish army. "I have seen none of them," said he, "during the campaign." I explained the reason of that, and why the dispersion of the Polish forces had at last rendered invisible an army of 82,000 men. "What do the Poles want?" "To be Prussians if they cannot be Poles." "And why not Russians?" replied he with an air of irritation. I explained to him the causes of the preference of the Poles to the Prussian system of government. He had no idea of it; but I was the better informed on the subject in consequence of some ministers of the duchy, who the day before remained long with me after dinner, having concluded that the best thing they could do would be to cling to the Prussian government as a plank to save them in their shipwreck. "He said, "We must raise 10,000 Cossacks. A lance and a horse is sufficient for them. With that force the Russians may be stopped." I discussed the idea, which appeared to me to deserve every sort of reprobation. He insisted. I resisted, and concluded by saying, "For my part I see no use in armies except those that are well organized, well paid, and well kept up. All the rest is good for very little." "I complained of some French agents; and when I observed that it was a pity to employ in foreign countries men who had neither decorum nor talents, he asked, "And where are these men of talents?" The course of the conversation had led me to speak of the little zeal the Austrians had found among the inhabitants of Volhinia. On this subject I adduced the testimony of Prince Louis of Lichtenstein, whom I had received at Warsaw, whither he came in con-

sequence of a wound he had received on the Bug. As I was adding to his name an honourable epithet, which I considered justly his due, the Emperor looked at me sternly. I paused. "Well," said he, "this prince," repeating word for word my expressions, "continue." I perceived I had displeased him.

"Soon after he dismissed me, recommending me to bring after dinner Count Stanislaus Potocki and the Minister of Finance, whom I had described as the two members possessing most credit in the council. Our interview had lasted about a quarter of an hour, and during that time the Emperor had never ceased to walk about with much agitation, as I had always been accustomed to see him. Sometimes he would, as is his habit, seem to fall into a profound reverie.

"We met again at the hotel d'Angleterre, at three o'clock, he had just arisen from table—"How long have I been in Warsaw?" "Eight days." "No, only two hours," said he, smiling without any preparation or preamble, "*from the sublime to the ridiculous there is but a step.* How do you do, Mr. Stanislaus, and you Mr. Minister of the Finances?" On these gentlemen repeatedly expressing the satisfaction they felt at seeing him well after so many dangers, he replied, "Dangers! Not the least. Agitation is life to me: the more trouble I have the better I am. None but sluggard kings fatten in their palaces. Horseback and camps for me." *From the sublime to the ridiculous there is only a step.* It was plain that he considered himself as an object for the derision of all Europe, and this idea was to him the greatest of all punishments. He said, "I find you

are very much alarmed here." "It is because we know only what public rumour informs us." "Bah! the army is superb, I have 120,000 men, I always beat the Russians; they durst not stand before me. They are no longer the soldiers of Friedland and Eylau. I am going to raise three hundred thousand men. Success wilt render the Russians rash. I shall give them three or four battles on the Oder, and in six months I shall be again on the Niemen. I am more wanting on the throne than with my army. Assuredly, I leave it with regret, but Austria and Prussia must be watched, and on my throne I have more weight than at the head of my army. All that has happened is nothing: It is a misfortune—it is the effect of climate. The enemy is good for nothing—I beat him every where. They wished to cut me off at the Beresina. I laughed at that fool of an admiral, he could never articulate his name. I had good troops and cannon; the position was superb, fifteen hundred toises of morass and a river." This was twice repeated. He added a good deal on strong and feeble minds, and mostly all that was inserted in the 29th bulletin. He then proceeded.

"It used to be otherwise. At Marengo, I was beaten until six in the evening; next day I was master of Italy. At Essling, I was master of Austria. That archduke thought to stop me. He published I know not what. My army had already advanced a league and a half. I did not do him the honour to make any dispositions, and it is well known what the state of things is when I act so; but I could not prevent the Danube from rising sixteen feet in one night. Ah! had it not been for that, the Austrian monarchy

was ended; but it was written in Heaven that I should marry an Archduchess. [This was said with an air of great gaiety]. It has been the same with Russia. I could not prevent the frost. I was told every morning that I had lost 10,000 horses during the night. Well! *bon voyage*. [This was repeated five or six times.] Our Norman horses are not so hardy as the Russian; they did not survive nine degrees of the frost. It is the same with the men. Look at the Bavarians; there is not one of them remaining. Perhaps it will be said I stopped too long at Moscow. It may be so, but the weather was good; the season was more advanced than usual. I expected peace. On the 5th of October I sent Lauriston with an overture. I thought of going to Petersburg. I have time for passing the winter in the southern provinces of Russia; at Smolensko. We will maintain ourselves at Wilna. I have left the King of Naples there, ah! ah! What a grand political scene. He who risks nothing gains nothing. *From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step.* The Russians have shewn themselves. The Emperor Alexander is beloved. They have clouds of Cossacks. That nation is something. The crown peasants love their government; the nobles have turned out on horseback. It was proposed to me to set the slaves free; that I did not wish to do; they would have made a general massacre, which would have been horrible. I therefore made regular war on the Emperor Alexander: but whoever could suppose they would have struck such a blow as the burning of Moscow. They now attribute that to us, but it was really they. Such an action would have done

honour to Rome. Many Frenchmen would have followed me. Ah! They are good subjects; they will find me."

"He then got into a rambling discourse on every subject, particularly on the levying the Cosack corps, with which he talked of stopping that Russian army, before which three hundred thousand Frenchmen had melted away. In vain the ministers represented the state of their country. He would yield nothing. I did not mix in the conversation, except when an opportunity offered for commiserating the state of the duchy. He granted as a loan a sum between two and three millions of Piedmontese mixed coin which had been for three months at Warsaw, and three or four millions in bills proceeding from contributions on Courland. I drew up the order for the minister of the treasury. The speedy arrival of the diplomatic corps was announced. "They are spies," said he; "I wish to have none of them at my headquarters. They have come, however. They are nothing but spies solely occupied in sending bulletins to their courts."

"In this manner the conversation continued for three hours. The fire had gone out, and we all felt the effects of the cold. The Emperor, however, who regarded nothing, seemed to keep himself warm by his vehement utterance. To a proposal for traversing Silesia, he replied, "Ah! Prussia." At length, after again repeating three or four times his phrase—*From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step*—asking whether he was known, and saying that he cared not—renewing the assurances of his protection to the ministers, and recommending to them to

take courage, he signified his wish to leave us. I once more assured him that nothing which concerned his service had been forgotten in the course of the embassy. The ministers joined me in addressing to him the most respectful and affectionate wishes for the preservation of his health and the prosperity of his journey. He replied, "I never was better; if I carried the devil with me I should be all the better for that." These were his last words. He then mounted the humble sledge, which bore Cæsar and his fortune, and disappeared. A violent shock which the vehicle received in passing out at the gate had nearly overturned it.

"Such was word for word, this famous conversation, in which Napoleon fully disclosed his bold and incoherent genius, his cold insensibility and the fluctuation of his ideas, among various diverging projects, his past schemes, and his approaching dangers. It made too deep an impression to leave me in any doubt of not having reported it correctly. I have called myself strictly to account, and I have not been able to reproach myself with any omission or inaccuracy.

"The prevailing sentiment which runs through the entire is, the fear which he discovers of the hisses with which he felt himself pursued, instead of that continual *hosanna* with which Europe, during fifteen years, had resounded. The conqueror's pride, and the vanity of the hissed poet, are observable in it from the beginning to the end, and display to the life the natural characteristics of a man, whose self-love made him always fear an epigram more than a battalion.

“ I have been told that extracts of the above conversation were circulated in Germany: of this I know nothing. I have been also told that these extracts were put down to my account. This imputation is unfounded, and has besides an odious appearance, inasmuch as the publication at that time would have been a species of infidelity, which imputation, circumstances prevent from applying to it just now. The conversation was then the property of the speakers, at the present day it belongs to the province of history, and refers to an event which both with regard to things and persons is entirely consummated.

“ The Emperor’s passing through Warsaw became the subject, as might be expected, of every conversation, and the report of the whole country. Nothing was more amusing than the letters which I received on that subject. Our agents vied with each other in all the extravagancies which that passing through Warsaw had excited. One of those gentlemen begged that a Gazette which announced that event should be interdicted.

“ The *corps diplomatique* arrived a few days after the Emperor. I exerted myself to perform every duty and to render every service due, as well to the public as to the personal character of each of the members of which it was composed, and which the misfortunes attached to their situation so justly claimed. One of them, the American minister, died a few leagues from Wilna, of an inflammation of the lungs, which the rapidity of the journey, in a season so rigorous, had brought upon him. This he owed to the mountebank tricks of the Duke of Bassano, who had amused the *corps diplomatique* with fetes

and fine words till the very moment that he intimated to them the order to depart in a few hours. This he termed refinement in politics; one might find no difficulty in giving it another appellation. It was also useless for him to attend to the benedictions and panegyrics of which he was the object, as well as the company of strolling players, of which he was the manager, who, under the appellation of the servants of the ministers of foreign relations, had passed the whole summer in performing plays at Wilna. This company was composed of inferior actors, of petty anacreontic authors; and when a man of business was looked out for among this troop, it was much to be apprehended that one might lay his hand on some *Colin* or *Jeannot*. A considerable number of these gentlemen paid me a visit on their passing through Warsaw, where they left neither myself, nor the strangers who were about me, very deeply penetrated with a profound respect for French diplomacy. One of our ambassadors accredited to a great court, who was addressing to me dispatches for Wilna, did not fail to entreat me to forward the "bit of paper" for Wilna. At length the Duke of Bassano arrived on the 16th of December; I saw him enter the court of my hotel at eight in the morning, in an open sledge; he was covered with hoar frost, having travelled when the weather was from twenty to twenty-five degrees below the freezing point, and, wonderful to relate, he had slept the whole night—so strong was his constitution. General Lauriston accompanied him. His *debut* was quite bewitching; I warmed him as well as I was able. After breakfast he spoke on business almost in the same way as he used to write. What

struck me most was, to see him convinced that we could maintain our post at Wilna. A few days before this he wrote to me that the only matter in question with respect to stopping at Wilna was, respecting subsistence; such follies were never before witnessed. I then declared my intention of giving up business altogether and the embassy; he calmed this first movement as well as he was able: he had my letters of recall in his pocket, but he had not as yet read them, he remained five or six days at Warsaw. It was on that occasion that I had an opportunity of observing him somewhat more closely, and assuring myself of the irregularities of which he spent his days, and of his disposition to perpetual talking, to the interminable expectation of which his inferior agents are condemned. It was at this epoch that the scene of ingratitude with respect to M. Andre took place.

“ Judging of the duke from his employments and from those encomiums which a man of his rank has always at his disposal, I had ever looked upon him as a man of talents—at least, a man of an enlarged knowledge of the world. He possessed great advantages of appearing to be so in a distinguished manner: a nearer approach was by no means favourable to him; he is then found to be heavy, abstracted, destitute of the brilliant or agreeable qualities which he is supposed to possess, and I cannot charge this opinion respecting him of being altogether unjust.

“ The Emperor, on mounting his sledge, had given reins to his anger against me: he passed many hours in railing and inveighing against me. Arrived at Kowno, twenty-one leagues from Warsaw, at five o'clock in the morning, he wrote a letter of four pages

to the duke. At the bottom of the first were these words—"I have seen the Abbe de Pradt at Warsaw: he has told me all manner of things. It appears to me that he possesses no quality fitting for his place. I have not signified any thing of this to him; you have only to recal him." The remainder of the letter related to that levy of Cossacks from which he expected the salvation of Poland. Here then have we the Duke of Bassano charged with a commission which he must have supposed to be disagreeable to me. I should do him the justice to say he behaved with great delicacy in the business, as the following anecdote will shew:—The day after his arrival I presented him a memorial on the inconvenience of continuing the embassy; I stated distinctly the reasons why I found it disagreeable; I told him at length that this epoch of my life was assuredly that in which physically and morally speaking I suffered the most.

"In the conversation which the presenting of this memorial was the means of introducing, I complained of the metamorphosis which I was obliged to undergo, from the character of an ambassador to that of a commissary. He answered me very *naively*, that a similar thing had happened to himself. I complained, besides, of having been, without any respect for my character, thrust into a mission which had a most decided revolutionary complexion; and I concluded with assuring him, that I was firmly resolved never to take any part in future in matters conceived without any participation on my part, directed contrary to my views—contrary to my manner of seeing and acting, and which reduced me to the condition of a passive instrument. The duke read my memorial, heard me

with the greatest kindness, applauded my determination of quitting the Embassy, and allowed of my retiring. At the same time that he gave the most favourable turn to my resignation, he did not suffer me to suspect that he was in possession of that order, of which he was the bearer—I felt the value of this behaviour, when I became acquainted with the circumstance; and I am happy to have it in my power to make a report of what does him so much honour.

“ I made use of the liberty which the Duke had given me; I prepared for my departure; I thought that I should hasten it out of regard to my health, which had suffered very much from such scenes of bustle and confusion: and my manner of communicating it to the public and to the council was agreeably to this version. I no more suspected what had happened in this respect to Poland, than that which awaited me at Paris.

“ I took advantage of the last moments of my Embassy to render a service to the Austrians, to which I was determined by very many motives. I had been for seven months a witness of the fidelity, the efforts, and sufferings of that army; I had frequently defended it against the Poles, who were not backward in accusing it of studied delays. This army had twice saved the Duchy; the campaign was evidently lost: the Prince of Schwartzemberg, almost abandoned to himself in a remote part of Lithuania, was left without information or direction in the midst of that confusion with which the catastrophe of the Grand Army was attended. He sent an officer to Warsaw to receive information from Baron de Baum,

who was Commissioner for the Government of Galicia to the Government of the Duchy. I had lived on the best terms with that Envoy; he had frequently transmitt dto me the expressions of the satisfaction of the Cabinet of Vienna. One or two days before my departure he arrived at my house, and having introduced an officer to me, he informed me what the object of his mission was, adding, that he wished to be directed altogether by my counsels. I did not suffer him to wait long for my advice, and told him, that in the state in which things were, that I regarded the sacrifice of one man more as an useless piece of barbarity—that his army should refuse every offensive operation, and confine himself to follow the general movement of the retreat, reserving the forces for more useful services to which he might be hereafter called. I am not able to paint the gratitude of the Baron, and that officer, in an adequate manner,—as for my part, I thought I did nothing more than my duty.

“At length I took my leave of the Council of Ministers; and they answered me by the letter annexed to this narrative. They appeared to have been sensibly affected by the letter I had written to them. I hope the publication of their letter will not be imputed to self-love, for every labour ought to have a proper recompense; and every family have a right to enjoy their titles of nobility. The King of Saxony ordered his Minister for foreign affairs to write to me, and express his Majesty’s satisfaction, and this has been repeated upon subsequent occasions.

“ I have received great proofs of affection and of sorrow at parting with the people of Poland, and, if I can believe them, I am not in the number of those who, very culpable with respect to France, have caused the French name to be hated by the Poles.

“ I set out on the 27th of December, and travelled, during eighteen days, in fifteen degrees of frost. This was a great degree of hardship; I would have thought beyond my force; I was deceived; I had need of all my strength to support the scenes which awaited me at Paris. I learned on my arrival, that the *Moniteur* had announced, the very next day after the Emperor's arrival, that I was deprived of my office of Grand Almoner.

“ I also found, on arriving, a letter from the Minister of Police. This letter invited me to reserve my first visit for him—another letter from the Minister of Public Worship, invited me to call at his house.

“ The attentions of such great personages bore rather a suspicious appearance. I had been also previously informed, that many persons, of whom I knew nothing, presented themselves to be informed of my arrival. It was clear that the storm was already collected.

“ I presented myself to the Minister of Police; he talked to me in general terms of the Emperor's displeasure. He appeared to me to be acquainted with that which had been declared against the Duke of Bassano, whose incapacity was proclaimed by the public. As to the rest, he did not speak precisely on

any point; listened to me for a long time when speaking on the affairs of Poland, and advised me by no means to present myself before the Emperor. I afterwards saw the Minister of Public Worship; he shewed me a letter by which the Emperor, at the moment of his arrival at Paris, enjoined him to order me to repair to my diocese. He was entirely ignorant of the motives of this order, and appeared to me to be affected at it.

“ From him I went to the house of the Duke of Bassano; he came up to me with a constrained air, and assuming a tone of voice which I perceived to be different from his natural manner, said to me, in broken accents, “ Mr. Ambassador, I feel real pain in communicating to you the orders of his Majesty—read them.” He then drew from his pocket the letter, dated from Kowno, and shewed me the article concerning myself. He had imagined that I would have been quite cast down by it; but it only caused me to laugh. He added that the Emperor had frequently told him, in a manner that shewed him to be sorely displeased, the bulletins, which he supposed to have come from Berlin, mentioned that I had spoken to him in a firm manner. I considered myself no more responsible for the bulletins of Berlin than for those of any other country, writings which, indited by mercenary hands, and those too either of ignorant persons or foreigners—translated from a foreign idiom, might, after the cascading of two or three translations, make a man say that which he never thought of. It might have happened that, in order to do me honour, I had been accommodated with this firm language, a Bulletinist not being pos-

sibly able to conceive any thing superior to an act of resistance to the Emperor Napoleon. I am acquainted with this race of Bulletin makers—it is one of the most contemptible that is to be found.

“ The Duke expressed the satisfaction which the presenting of my memorial had given him, by which I demanded my recal, as it spared him the disagreeable necessity of discharging a commission so very harsh. I repeated the assurances which I had already given, of withdrawing myself from business, so long as matters would be conducted as I had seen them to be; and I concluded with telling him, that the time was approaching in which the persons disgraced by the Emperor Napoleon might be destined to become the favourites of the nation.

“ I then knew how to account for every thing, and could explain it from the displeasure which my conversation at Warsaw had produced, and from the invectives thrown out against me in the course of the journey to Kowno, as well as from the act of depriving me of the place of Grand Almoner, and the precipitation of the order for my repairing to my diocese; for these were his first acts when he arrived in Paris—so sore was the wound, and so much need had it for the application of the first dressing of vengeance.

“ I set out for Mechlin the very day that the Emperor ran unexpectedly to Fontainebleau, to force a signature of a Concordat, which proves that he was still less acquainted with the Pope than I was with Poland. He has frequently repeated that vain and insignificant imputation which he applies on all occasions, and which constitutes a part of that kind of

reasoning of which he is made up. He happened to say at Mayence, in 1813, "I have committed two faults in Poland, the first, to send* a Priest there, and the second, not to make myself King of it."—He was mad enough to believe that placing the crown on his own head would be to render it immoveable.

"In January, 1814, when one of the Magistrates of Paris resisted one of the revolutionary measures that Napoleon wished to have executed, he said to him, Ah well! with all your ability I see you would imitate the Archbishop of Mechlin. It is through him that I am no longer master of the world.

"The night before the affair of Brienne, Napoleon slept in a cottage, where he received intelligence of the movements of the enemies that nearly surrounded him. After passing several hours of cruel suspense and anxiety, an aid-de-camp came to inform him, that the causeway leading to Brienne was again unoccupied; in consequence of the direction which the enemy had taken, he jumped up, and with considerable vivacity made use of an exclamation which betrayed the ruling passion of his life, "I may yet," said he, "be master of the world."

"Such is the faithful recital of my Embassy to Poland; It may be depended upon as perfectly correct. I have written it in the midst of great dangers, in order that I might not suffer materials to perish, which could not be found any where but with myself. May I be permitted to express a wish that all those who possess such materials for our history may make a similar use of them—in a word; let us make the history of our times clear. Hitherto nothing

has been written but romances, satires, or hymns. Truth—*sang-froid*—the connexion of the events one with the other—their dependence or concatenation—the character of the actors—nothing of this is to be found; the prism of the passions or of interest has discomposed every thing. The dove on leaving the ark was not more embarrassed than is the mind to find repose in the deluge of strange writings, in which, hitherto, the history of the Revolution has been composed. One knows not where to place his foot. This history can only be produced from the collection of materials similar to those which we have collected: and the assertion may be previously hazarded, that those who only know this history from the journals and from French writers, will experience a degree of astonishment equal to that of Epimenides when he awoke."

DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN PAGE 147.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY M. DE PRADT.

Monseigneur,

The Council of Ministers, sensibly affected by the sentiments which your Excellency has expressed in taking leave of them, wishes to preserve the words addressed to them as a precious monument. Invited by them to make this request, I am also charged to testify the warm regret which has been excited by your departure. Under the most difficult circumstances, to an indefatigable zeal in the service of your august Sovereign, which has never ceased to inspire you, you have added that unvarying benevolence which cannot be exceeded. Your prudence, your rare talents, and your great virtues, still more precious, have constantly supported and encouraged us in prosecuting the efforts which our duty and our gratitude to our august Regenerator impose upon us. If these sentiments which your example is calculated to exalt, should merit your esteem, deign to believe that yours have made a deep impression on our minds, and that your name will always be honoured and cherished by every Pole, who, with us, had the happiness of knowing you.

M

Accept, Monseigneur, this feeble homage, due to your virtues, as an indelible mark of gratitude.

I have the honour to be, with high consideration,

Monseigneur,

Your Excellency's most humble

And most obedient Servant,

The President of the Council of Ministers,

STANISLAUS COUNT POTOCKI.

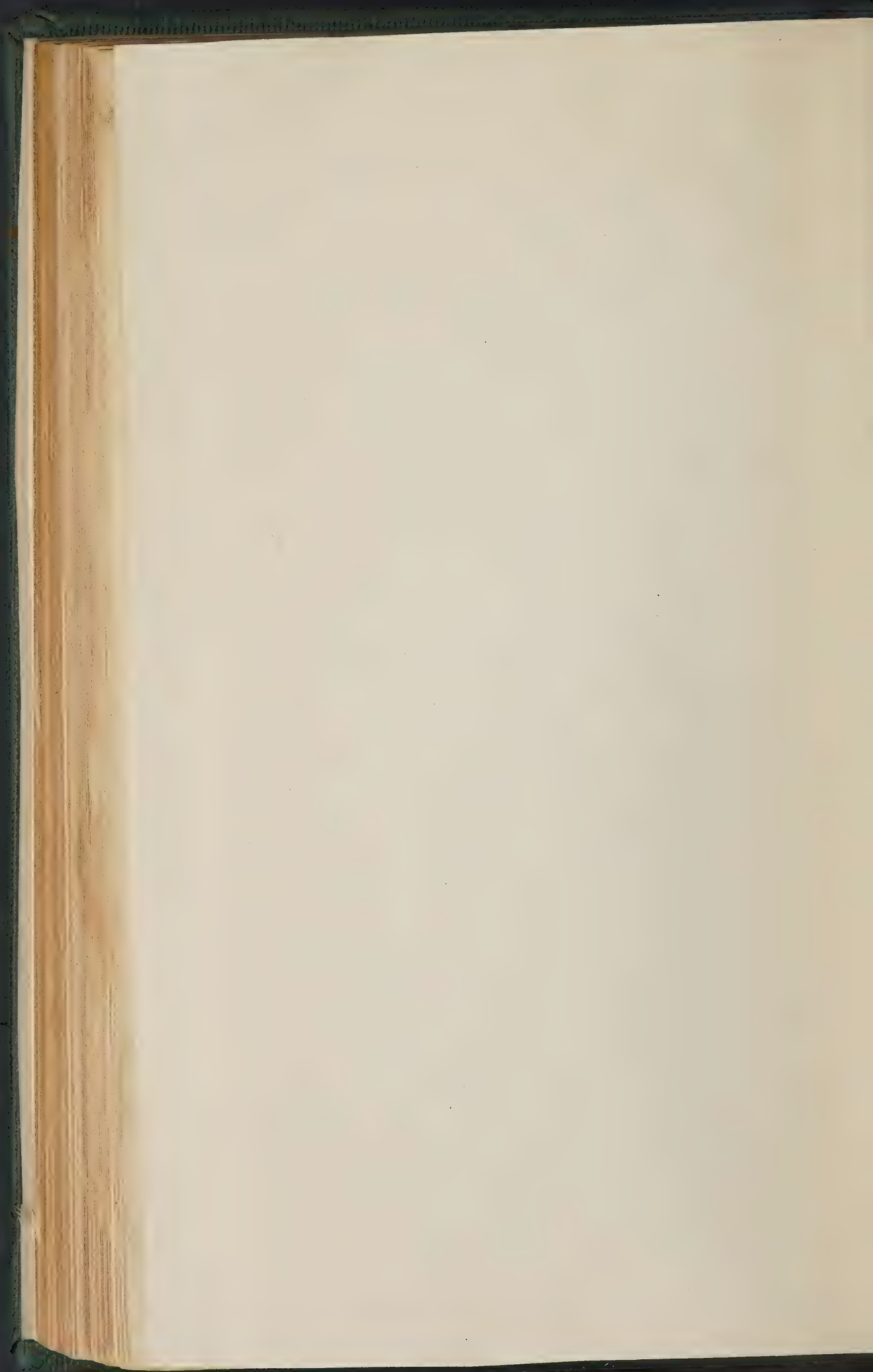
Warsaw, Dec. 24, 1812.

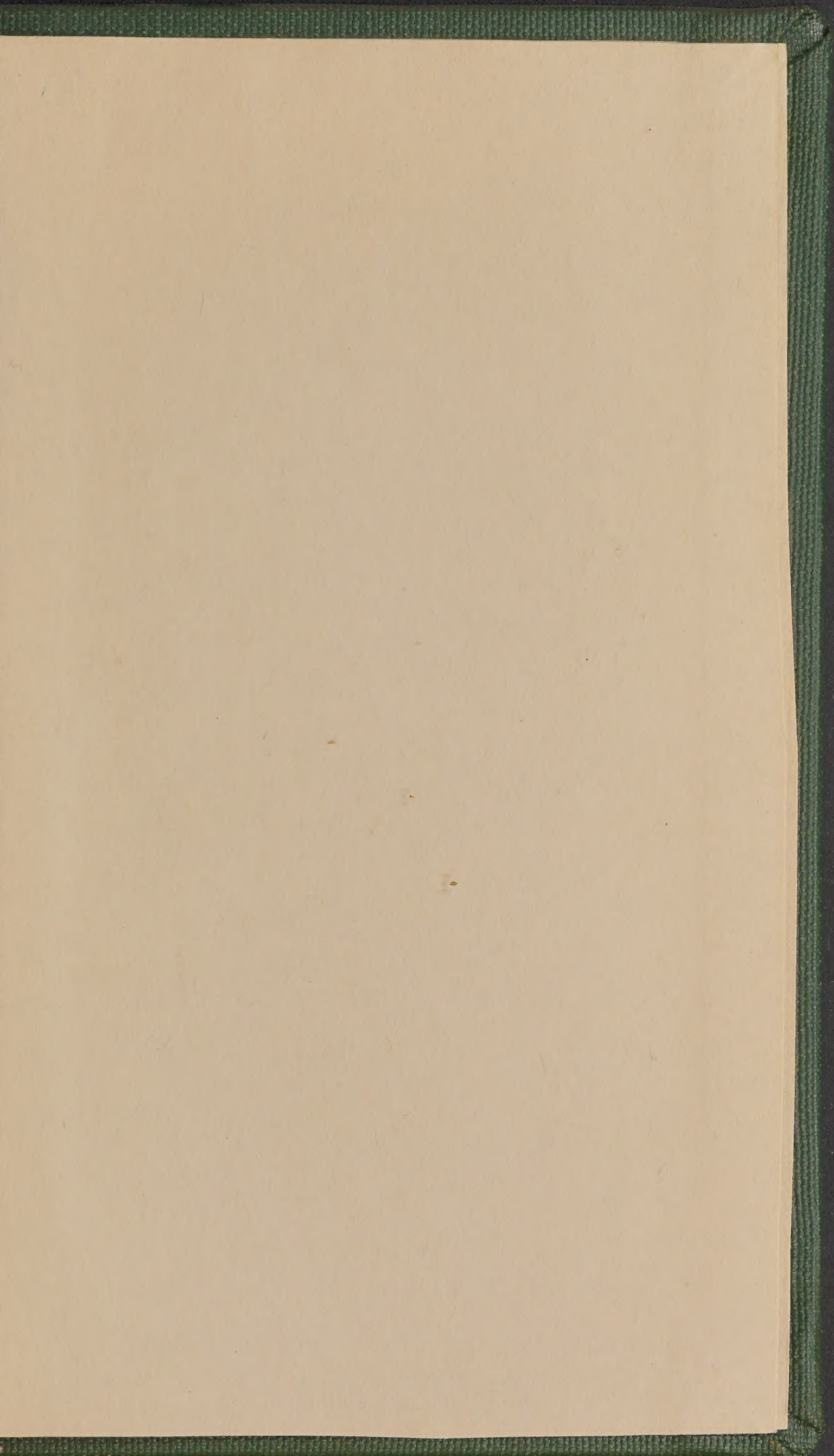
Monseigneur,

I have received two letters, which you did me the honour to address to me on the 22d and 23d of December. I have learned, with considerable regret, that you have ceased to fill a station, in which, though I had but few occasions of being personally concerned, I was satisfied with the connection between us, in a country where I had the honour of being born, and where you was esteemed by every distinguished and well-informed person; where your worth was also appreciated by a Sovereign, the friend of yours, whose approbation, always pure, is never bestowed but upon virtue and real merit. The King has charged me to express these sentiments to you on his part, as well as his gratitude for the interest and good-will you have constantly shewn in promoting the happiness of his people and government.

LE COMTE DE SENFT.

Dresden, Jan. 4, 1813.







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